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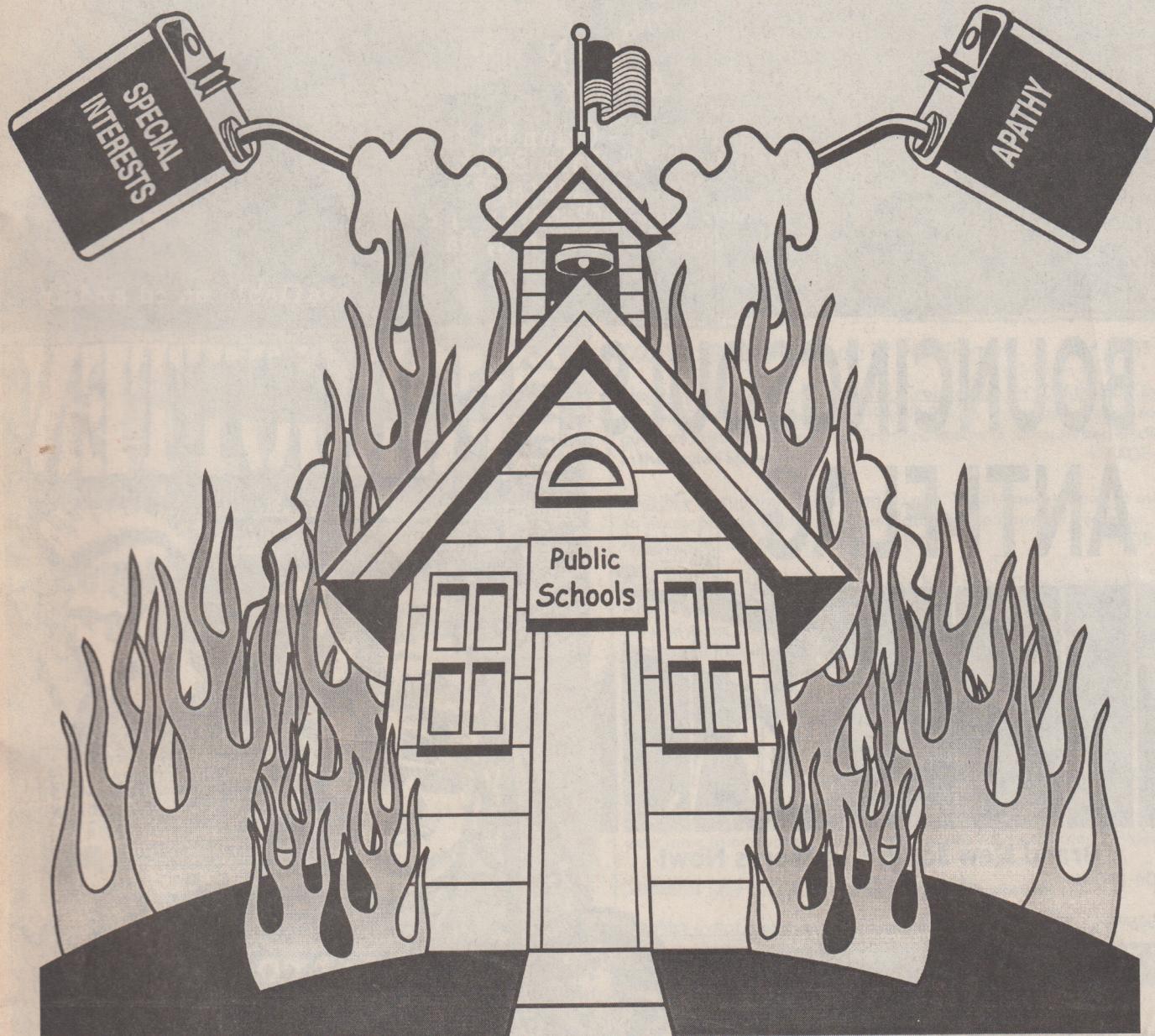
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October/November '02

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Privatizing Public Schools: Leveling the Playing Field or Political Football?

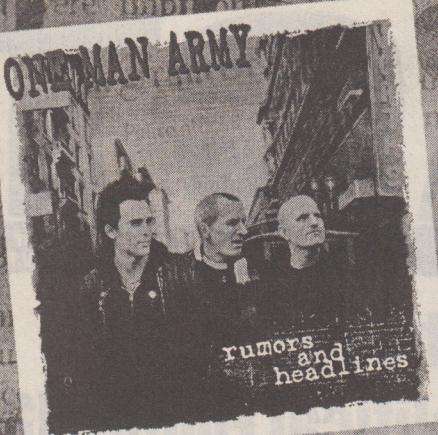


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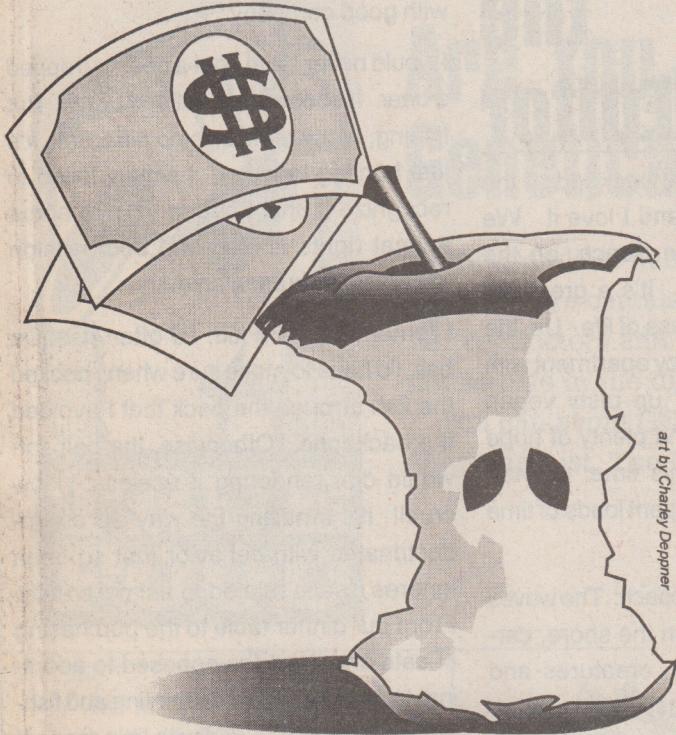


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IMPACT PRESS • ISSUE 41 • OCTOBER/NOVEMBER '02



Privatizing Public Schools: Leveling the Playing Field or Political Football?

by Morris Sullivan

Tuition vouchers, charter schools, and privatization promise creative solutions to America's education crisis. Will they really solve the problem, or are their supporters simply kicking our kids' education around the field just to keep the audience interested in the game? • PAGE 22

"Scientific evidence overwhelmingly indicates that cannabis is substantially less harmful than alcohol and should be treated not as a criminal issue but as a social and public health issue."

"Education is a weapon, whose effect depends on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed." -- Joseph Stalin

"The soul is the same in all living creatures, although the body of each is different." -- Hippocrates

CONTENTS:

Notes From the Cultural Wasteland by Morris Sullivan: Reality TV—The crack cocaine of the information age, or new hope for jaded consumers of political coverage?" • PAGE 8

Cooperation Essential in a Shrinking World by David Suzuki: Politicians have to realize we live in a small, interconnected world and sustainability requires cooperation. • PAGE 10

No Media Interest in a Matter of Democracy by Norman Solomon: It may not be making headlines right now, but the flagrantly undemocratic structure of the Senate probably should. • PAGE 11

Over-Priced Musings by Don Pflaster: Satellite Tracking Moves To Ships – Boats in the St. Lawrence Seaway will soon be tracked by GPS transmitters. But that might only be the beginning. • PAGE 12

Animals Like Us: The Search for a Species Identity by Dr. Steven Best: Dr. Best examines current crises in the natural world and the role played by the construction of a presumptive species identity. • PAGE 16

Video Review: Farm Sanctuary's "Life Behind Bars" by Craig Mazer: This short video on factory farming sends a powerful message and Mary Tyler Moore's heartfelt narration is superb. • PAGE 19

COMICS: The Muddlemarch by Neal Skorpen • PAGE 21

Elections in America: Assume Crooks Are in Control by Lynn Landes: Don't blame the poll workers in Florida. As far as we know, some guy from Russia could be controlling the outcome of computerized elections in the United States. • PAGE 30

Invisible Casualties by Paul Rogat Loeb: What does it mean to make so many people routinely expendable in the name of progress, the market, and the American way of life? • PAGE 34

Dog Labs: No Way to Treat "Man's Best Friend" by Heather Moore: Although "dog labs" have been illegal in the United Kingdom for several years, many medical and veterinary universities in the United States still include dog labs in their curricula. • PAGE 36

Adam Finley... Breaks The Silence by Adam Finley: Whatever happened to individual reflection? It's time to re-evaluate the "Moment of Silence." • PAGE 40

COMIC: The K Chronicles by Keith Knight • PAGE 41

We're Not Winning the War on Terrorism by Jesse Walker: One year later, things aren't much better nor are we much safer. • PAGE 44

Quickies - A Little Bit On A Lot of Records • PAGES 50-57

Activist Event Listings: Join a protest, attend a rally. • PAGE 57

QUOTES:

-- Canadian Senator Pierre Claude Nolin

IMPACT® press

covering issues the way the media should

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A Fact from IMPACT: The U.S.D.A. reports that in 2000, nearly 1 in 5 U.S. children (10 million) went hungry. One in ten households could not lead active, healthy lives because they did not have enough to eat. And over 4 million households had to skip or reduce their meals.

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." - Thomas Jefferson



From the Editor

I recently spent a long weekend at the beach. My girlfriend and I love it. We usually go to St. Pete Beach, on the west coast of Florida. It's a great escape from the hecticness of life. Us, the beach, a small efficiency apartment with a kitchen (for cookin' up tasty vegan meals), lots of wine and plenty of hope for good weather. This time, we had amazing weather and spent loads of time on the beach.

So, here we are, on the beach. The waves gracefully lapping up on the shore, carrying away little shells, creatures and grains of fine west coast Florida sand. The sun, high in the sky, heats the water, making it a delight to enter. People comb the sand for the most-Visually appealing shells, while others frolic in the ocean. All of this beauty surrounds us, but each trip to the beach exposes cruelty as well.

A young boy and his father were on the beach, rods in hand, lines cast, waiting for the "exciting" moment when they would hook a fish and drag it in to shore. I saw how happy the boy was and it brought back many memories, both positive and not so.

I used to love fishing. I fished with my dad as a young kid in South Florida and with friends as I grew up. It was always a good time and, in hindsight, the fishing was of little import. Of course, catching a big fish was always a thrill.

Cruelty never crossed my mind, though. It wasn't even that I tried to rationalize it

with stupid, false or illogical excuses like "fish don't feel pain" or "I throw 'em back." It was just a great way to pass a day with good company.

I would never have shot a deer or trapped a beer. It seemed violent and unfair. But fishing, I now realize, is no different. It's just hunting in water. I simply failed to recognize it until I began to care about animal rights issues and compassion towards non-human animals.

I remember, as a kid, I'd often use live bait. I'd have to make sure when I hooked the fish through the back that I avoided the backbone. Otherwise, the bait fish would die, rendering it useless. How cruel! It's amazing the way we are indoctrinated with behavior that so often ignores issues related to animal cruelty. From our dinner table to the purchasing of cats and dogs (as opposed to adopting) to such "hobbies" as hunting and fishing, children are raised with little respect for the pain and suffering humans inflict daily on non-human animals.

As we become a more enlightened species (we are, I hope), it's important that issues about compassion towards non-human animals become common subject matter in all homes. Fishing is a great place to start and it's necessary for parents to start teaching their kids that fishing is cruel and that there are other ways to spend long afternoons with family or friends.

• craig mazer •



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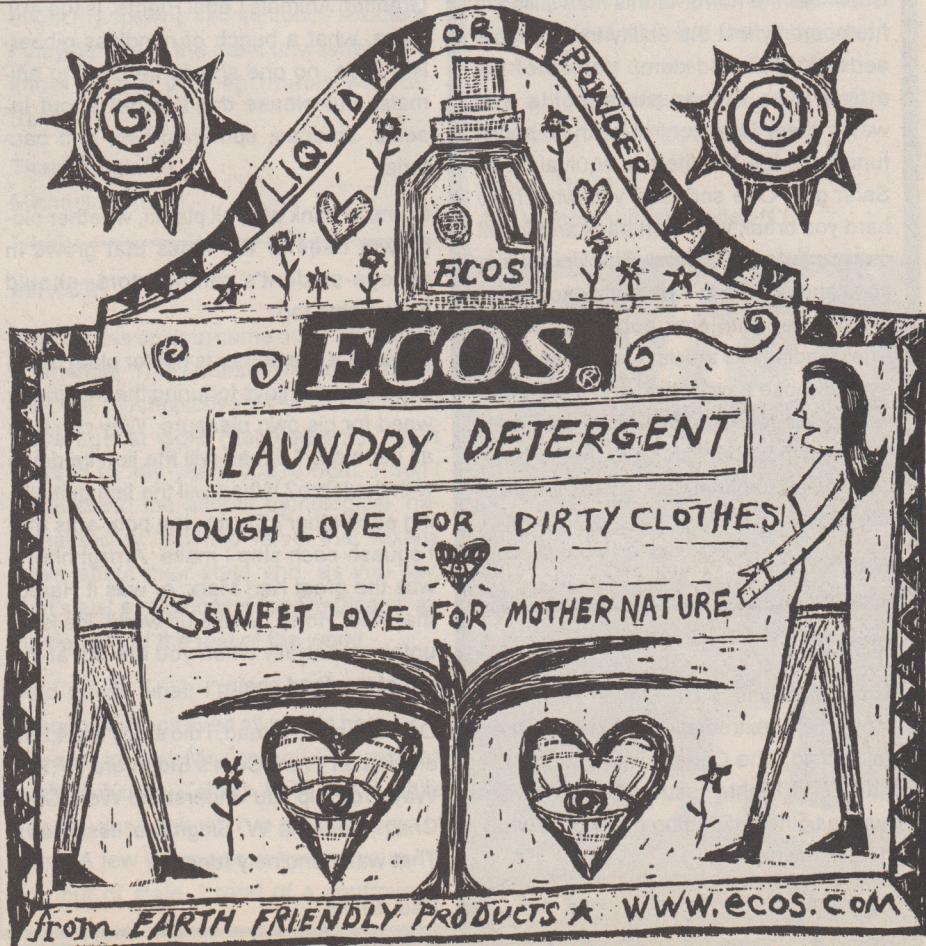


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IMPACT:

I have been active on behalf of animals for most of my adult life. Congratulations. This is the single most asinine piece of hyperbole I have ever read on a topic I care deeply about ("Legally Blind: The Case For Granting Animals Legal Rights" Issue 40). Or, for that matter, almost any topic...it was THAT bad. It was so bad I actually feel dumber after having read it.

The few minutes I spent reading it are a black hole in my psyche where thoughts formerly existed...his fetid logic now rendering this space dead forever. Each paragraph of this atrocity shaved I.Q. points off me like a straight razor over a wart. It was actually brilliant in its total dearth of a coherent argument or cohesive value. It was the "Anti-Article"...a perfect antithesis of an intelligent commentary.

Such was the horror of this man's illogic, I temporarily lost the ability to conjugate verbs. We should dump copies of his article over Taliban strongholds and watch them lose control of their bodily functions. It's the literary equivalent of Sarin gas. One sniff and you wretch so hard you break your own back and vomit out your internal organs. The United Nations should ban this pathetic excuse for a professor from ever publishing again. After reading this article, I feel closer than ever to those psychotics who put kittens in microwaves. You should be ashamed of yourself for publishing it. It sets back the cause of animal rights by its very existence.

Wayne Crane

IMPACT:

Congratulations to Dr. Steven Best, brilliant article, extremely well written ("Legally Blind: The Case For Granting Animals Legal Rights" Issue 40). (I only wish I was as gifted at putting into words what I feel in my heart!)

Well Done, Cathy Keyte

IMPACT:

I fully agree ("Legally Blind: The Case For Granting Animals Legal Rights" Issue 40) on giving right to Animals (and even plants, why not?), but I found ironic that a country that does not even support some human rights (death row, secret and unjustified incarceration without access to lawyer, child labour, etc...), like the United States, is actively fighting for animals legal rights. It would definitely be easier if we start respecting human, then maybe we will have a better chance of respecting the rest of the world.

André Leroux
Montréal, Canada

IMPACT:

That was a hilarious look into the politics of the far left ("Legally Blind: The Case For Granting Animals Legal Rights" Issue 40). Geez, what a bunch of mindless gibberish! Sure, no one should be cruel to animals. But please don't forget about insects, amebas, sponges, fish, and bacteria.

Come to think of it, all plants, whether old-growth trees or the moss that grows in college-student's refrigerators, should have rights too.

Obviously, the author is not for plant rights because he enjoys torturing the marijuana weed for his own pleasure. Why can't we all get along? When will the lion lie down with the lamb? When will the fish quit eating each other? Oh my, the poor ants that I squash each step I make. Arrrrghhh. It was the great Karl Marx, or was it Harpo, that said "Honk." Wake up world, life is so unfair, especially when you are not at the top of the food chain.

On a separate thread, I did enjoy the 4,389 articles on WorldCom's Sidgmore ("7,254 Ways To Help You Understand WorldCom Chairman John W. Sidgmore" Issue 40). That was genuinely funny.

Paul Smith

IMPACT:

One small note: the improprieties at WorldCom happened before John Sidgmore took the reigns ("7,254 Ways To Help You Understand WorldCom Chairman John W. Sidgmore" Issue 40). They happened under the not so benign leadership of Bernie Ebers, who Sidgmore replaced less than a year ago. As soon as he took the reigns, he ordered the audit that discovered the improprieties to begin with and promptly reported them.

Please target the correct people. There are many current WorldCom employees who would like to keep their jobs.

Frank Jordan

IMPACT:

Loved your history of John Sidgmore ("7,254 Ways To Help You Understand WorldCom Chairman John W. Sidgmore" Issue 40). I've got thousands of friends who will enjoy it as well.

Thanks A Million
Tim Robinson

IMPACT:

Being an animal lover, I felt this terribly feeling in my throat (almost wanted to cry) knowing how these people, or better called "trash" because that's what I consider this type of ***holes, do to poor innocent animals and these judges absolutely don't know how to do their job ("From the Editor" Issue 40). I hate how animal cruelty is treated like a misdemeanor when, in reality, it should be treated as a serious crime. Animals feel the same pain and everything as people, the only thing is that they can't speak and say anything. The country should do something about these laws that only give a couple of days in prison or nothing at all because they make me sick. If

Speak Your Mind. . .

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only these ***holes could have the same faith as these poor innocent animals they tortured and killed. These bastards don't deserve to live. I hope they burn in hell!

From an animal lover (2 cats, 1 dog)

IMPACT:

I am writing in response to your article about animal abusers and the need to get tougher sentencing ("From the Editor" Issue 40). The examples given in the article were absolutely unbelievable and made me feel sick to my stomach. Unfortunately, these kinds of stories happen way too often and are treated much too lightly. I want to thank you for publishing such a fine article about a subject which is too often swept under the rug for fear of upsetting people or having people think the space should be allocated to stories of human suffering.

I am the Administrative Coordinator for Tribe of Heart in Ithaca, New York. We work to end animal suffering and teach compassion for all living beings. Please visit our web site, www.tribeofheart.org. I think you will find it interesting.

Thanks again for helping to bring awareness to so many of such a horrible tragedy that happens somewhere every day.

Warmly,
Lisa Cochran
Tribe of Heart

IMPACT:

This story is so true ("Bastion of Ecological Literacy Under Siege: Our Public Schools" Issue 40). Not 30 miles away from me, in Palmrya, Annville, Pennsylvania area, their school boards are fighting to reject environmental lit-

erature because they say it runs counter to The Bible. The Bible is used to confuse the many that live day to day and never look back to see all the damage done to this Earth.

It is that old tactic employed to control the masses from the beginning of time. Keep them in debt, punish those who speak out and the rich and powerful control everything. (From The Cradle To The Grave).

Is there anything we can do to stop this madness? UNITE—UNITE—UNITE! We can't just take one topic and run with it, leaving all the rest to fend for themselves. If a tree dies, so does a bird and eventually so do we.

We are not part of something. We are the whole. If that first person doesn't take that step forward, will the next? I thank you for this read. You just keep stepping forward and others and I will try to catch up. Sorry about my spelling and sentence structure. I may be one of the great unwashed, but I know we are in deep trouble with our Earth.

Thanks again,
Michael F. Ruger

IMPACT:

I realize this column came out a while back ("America, The Lonestar Nation?" Issue 39), but I just discovered your site a few days ago at work (don't ask :^). I just wanted to say yeah, you're right, I don't understand the almost pathological 'nationalistic' or 'patriotic' fervor that Texans have about their state and, as you say, that's just a microcosm for Americans' attitude toward the rest of the world.

And guess what: I'm a native Texan, although I haven't lived all my life here - 7 1/2 years in New Mexico and Colorado as well, but then I came back for a while (again, don't ask :^). I've got to get out of here. A few years ago, when we were living out of state, I read of a controversy

here over what slogan to put on the license plates, which other states had already had for years (a slogan, that is). I thought "The Backward State" might be good, but of course, there are many other states who might jealously compete for the right to put that on their plate.

Anyway, keep up the good work,
Anonymous email

IMPACT:

As a volunteer in my local animal shelter, I am all too familiar with man's inhumanity to animals ("From the Editor" Issue 40). Yes, I absolutely agree that the toughest punishment possible should be inflicted upon any abuser. I believe some of the sentence should be that any abuser be made to do community service in an animal shelter to learn and understand of the plight of the thousands of homeless animals that languish in shelters only to meet death because there are not enough loving and secure homes for these poor creatures.

Isobel Doyle
Mt. Vernon Animal Shelter, NY

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Notes from the Cultural Wasteland

morris sullivan
morris sullivan



Lights fade up on the stage, bare except for a semi-circle of seven metal folding chairs. MORRIS sits in the center chair, flanked by GROUP MEMBER ONE and GROUP MEMBER TWO. Other GROUP MEMBERS fill the other chairs.

MORRIS: Hi. I'm Morris, and I'm an addict.

GROUP MEMBERS: Hi, Morris!

MORRIS: (taking a drag off a cigarette, choking a little) I...I'm not sure where to start. And I feel so...

GROUP MEMBER ONE: It's okay, man. No need to feel ashamed.

GROUP MEMBER TWO: We've all been where you are. Just let go. Start at the beginning.

MORRIS: (another drag, composing himself) Right. Well, it all started innocently enough. I mean, I tried it out of curiosity. I never meant to do it more than once, maybe twice. I told myself it was like car-crash curiosity—you know, the way you can't help but look when you drive past an accident on the road. And even after I'd tried it that first time, I told myself it really wasn't that good—you know? Like I wouldn't bother to do it again. But then, the very next chance I had, there I was...doing it again. (falters a little, takes another drag) After that, within only a day or so, I found myself looking forward to the next time. Pretty soon, I didn't even question it; I just did it. And again. Only three or four times, and it was already getting out of hand. (voice breaks a little) Thank God it just wasn't possible to do it every night...

MEMBER ONE: (putting his hand on MORRIS' shoulder) It's okay. Take your time.

MEMBER TWO: And remember, we're all in this together.

MORRIS: Thanks. Right. Sometimes, I feel so alone. It's nice to know there are others. (takes another drag) Anyway, I always thought I was above this sort of thing. I mean, don't take this the wrong way, but it's just not my style, you know? I never had any trouble resisting this kind of stuff before. It just wasn't interesting to me. So even when it started getting out of hand, when I'd find myself in the middle of the afternoon thinking to the next one, wondering what it would be like and if I'd feel that same rush when the big climax came, I was telling myself—and this seems so trite and cliché now—that I could quit any time. I didn't need it. I could just turn it off! (snaps fingers) Just like that, you know? (MEMBERS nod affirmatively) I guess everyone tells himself that.

MEMBER ONE: I told myself the same thing.

MORRIS: But I think...on some level...I knew I was hooked. I mean, I'd start looking for ways to slip it into conversation, you know? To see if others were turned onto it the way I was. One day, I started talking to this guy—a good guy, manager of a big organization—and found out he was into it, too. I almost jumped for joy—here was someone like me, someone who'd felt the rush. Just talking about it with another fanatic was almost as good as actually turning on to it. We chattered about it like a couple of speed freaks. About Simon, and how despite his deliberate rudeness, he was right a lot of the time. About whether RJ would make it to the top five or not, and whether Kelly would win; how we both liked Nikki but didn't think she had a chance. God, it was great!

MEMBER TWO: Sure. Everyone felt that way. Just look at the bulletin boards.

MORRIS: Oh, man! I mean, I knew I was in trouble when I actually started voting, but that's when I knew I'd hit rock bottom—when I started posting stuff on those bulletin boards. I stayed up all night after a show once, just not wanting to let go of that high, you know?

MEMBER ONE: We know. Been there, done that.

MORRIS: And now—I can't believe it—it's over. And I catch myself thinking, "Well, there's always next year." But then, rationally, I know next year I shouldn't watch. I mean, it just consumed too much of my life.

MEMBER TWO: You just take it one day at a time, man. Just don't turn on that TV the first time, and you'll be fine.

MORRIS: But even now, I watch Fox news, because they talk about it. I keep hoping to catch a glimpse of Nikki. I mean, Kelly was the best singer, but Nikki was rock and roll. (getting choked up) It's so unfair.

MEMBER ONE: But she sang flat, Morris.

MEMBER TWO: But he's right—she was more rock and roll.

MORRIS: And when she sang "Piece of my Heart," it was so...

MEMBER ONE: (interrupting him and rising to confront MEMBER TWO) So? I think people voted for her because of her looks. Kelly could sing!

MEMBER TWO: (rising, too, getting angry) This was supposed to be about an American idol! So what if she sounds like Mariah? Mariah's washed up!

MEMBER ONE and MEMBER TWO start shoving each other and

yelling. The others join in, shouting about computer power-dialers and the like, until the scene becomes a chaotic melee. It's hard to make out what anyone is saying, except the occasional "Britney Spears can't sing a note, either!" and "Whitney Houston? Who the fuck cares about Whitney Houston?" The lights begin to fade on the fracas as MORRIS steps forward into a spot.

MORRIS: Many scenes like this are unfolding in America this fall, as people from all over the country try to recover from weeks of watching *American Idol*. Fortunately, there is help for the Idolholics who suffer from this pernicious disease. Of course, thousands of people have joined support groups like this one....

A metal folding chair sails past MORRIS, followed shortly by MEMBER TWO, who picks it up and rushes back into the fray with it.

...but there are other things to see on television, and some of it is even more important than *American Idol*. For example, there are elections going on all over the country. I'm especially lucky, because I live in Florida, where election news lasts for days and days after the polls have closed. Take Florida's Democratic gubernatorial primary, for instance. The race is

relatively insignificant. It should mean almost nothing to the rest of you, and not a heck of a lot more than that to Floridians, because any Democrat would be better than Jeb Bush. But, especially after the elections debacle in 2000, news that the "repairs" didn't work, and that a lot of Floridians didn't get to vote, or didn't get their votes counted—well, to a recovering Idolholic, that's almost as good as methadone to a heroin junkie.

MORRIS is left alone in a tight, white light. The GROUP MEMBERS quietly, unobtrusively exit as he talks.

Now, let me back up just a little. I said "relatively insignificant." I don't mean that the election results are relatively insignificant. Most people who vote—and there aren't that many, percentage-wise—only vote in Presidential elections. But most of the things that affect us on a day-to-day level are decided by the people chosen in those "relatively insignificant" elections. Think about it: how good are the schools in your community? The roads? How safe do you feel walking down the street at night?

And how free are you, when it comes to things you do, or would like to do, in your own hometown? You know, most of the repressive laws—laws about obscenity, nudity, and public expression—get passed on a city or county level. Regardless of how you feel about this, it's good to recognize that virtually every move toward decriminalizing marijuana has begun on a state or county level. And those "relatively insignificant" elections decide who's going to be making decisions affecting water quality in your town, affecting how many trees a developer can bulldoze to put up a shopping center, and so on. So in a lot of ways, those elections are more significant than the one deciding who's going to be president.

However, that's the one that gets the most ink and airtime. Yet relatively few Americans put a lot of effort into that choice, even.

I started thinking about that while I was watching *American Idol*. And I thought, "Gee! Wouldn't it be interesting if Americans chose their elected officials the way they chose their so-called 'idol'?" Imagine if everyone who wanted to run for Governor, for instance, got to audition for the role in a big Fox reality TV show. Instead of singing Burt Bacharach songs,

of course, they'd have to make speeches and demonstrate their leadership abilities, so maybe the format would be something like a cross between *Idol* and *Survivor*."

This, I mused, would solve a couple of problems with the American political system. First, running wouldn't cost the contestants anything, and whether or not they had a lot of friends in high places wouldn't matter as much. Therefore, an unknown would stand as much chance of being elected as someone with money and influence.

Most important, though, more people would watch an exciting TV show than would pay attention to media coverage of primary races and the like. They might actually learn from the show what issues are important, and perhaps vote based on what the candidates stand for and might actually do, rather than based on how pretty their campaign posters are.

(NOTES, continued on page 60)

Cooperation Essential in a Shrinking World

Forty years ago, Rachael Carson published her seminal work *Silent Spring*. The book literally launched an environmental movement, as it eloquently chronicled the terrible, unintended effects of pesticides on the web of life. Suddenly, the world seemed much smaller and more fragile.

Since then, while scientists have busily researched and described the earth's physical and biological interconnections, politicians and economists have continued to act as if their work existed in a vacuum. This isolationism has to end if we are to move into a truly sustainable future.

Over the three decades following *Silent Spring*, environmental disasters, from Love Canal to Chernobyl and Exxon Valdez, punctuated the news. While these localized events made the headlines, much more damaging was the continued creep of human influence into every ecosystem on the planet. Industrial and agricultural pollutants were traveling all the way to the seemingly pristine Arctic. Other pollutants were gnawing away at the earth's protective ozone layer, threatening to expose us to more of the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. And carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels was building up like a blanket in the atmosphere, trapping heat and causing global warming.

By the 1990s, environmental problems had grown, compounded and burst free of national boundaries. It was clear that solutions to many of these problems could only be found at a global level. With this in mind, the United Nations convened the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It was the largest meeting of its kind, and meant to signal that a new importance would be placed on environmental issues. Five years later, out of Rio, the Kyoto Protocol was born. A cooperative international agreement, Kyoto was to be the first step in slowing global warming.

At the recent meetings in Johannesburg, South Africa, marking the 10-year anniversary of the Earth Summit, Canada took a very important step by agreeing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. For this, Prime Minister Chrétien should be applauded. The Summit was an excellent opportunity for the world to take other such steps towards sustainability, but unfortunately the dominant theme was not one of cooperation, but one of bickering. The United States has dropped out of Kyoto, renegeing on its promise with little more than a shrug. Many proposals at the conference were watered down with language that made them virtually useless. Consider the proposal to restore declining fisheries—the United States insisted on adding the phrase “where possible” to the text. The complete vagueness of such a phrase enables the U.S. to use it as an excuse to ignore any regulations that may be developed. Can you imagine such language with other regulations? Speed limit: 100kph—where possible. Use of handguns prohibited—where possible.

Of all countries, the United States should be concerned about

By David Suzuki • art by Greg Rebis



developing a cohesive plan for sustainable development. Yet on the eve of the anniversary of the horrible terrorist attacks, the U.S. proved to be one of the main foot-draggers in Johannesburg. Although the attacks made an indelible imprint on the American psyche, there has been little debate about the underlying causes of the hatred that led to them in the first place. Instead, the reasons were simplified under the banner of “religious fanaticism.” And the prevailing attitude became, ‘If we question America now, the terrorists have already won.’ American leaders sagely provided the following solution: Go shopping! Ironically, one of the very activities that bred a seething resentment of the USA by some in the developing world—conspicuous consumption—was trumpeted as the road to salvation.

When the American economy didn’t plummet after the attacks, the tactic was deemed a resounding success. Of course, the underlying stresses that led to the attacks are still there—poverty, inequality and American dependence on Middle Eastern oil. We can’t shop our way out of these problems.

We’ve come a long way, but Rachael Carson’s warnings 40 years ago are still relevant today. We live in a small, interconnected world. Sustainability requires cooperation. And until we push our politicians to look beyond narrowly defined economic and political goals, it will remain just out of reach. ■

Dr. David Suzuki is a geneticist, broadcaster, author, teacher and Chair of the David Suzuki Foundation (www.davidsuzuki.org).

No Media Interest in a Basic Matter of Democracy

A basic principle of democracy is that every person's vote should have equal weight. So we might expect some public discourse about the fact that the U.S. Senate is fundamentally undemocratic. But it's a complete non-issue among politicians and journalists alike.

One of the key roles of news media should be to raise important questions that powerful people in government don't want to ask—or answer. However, while thousands of reporters and pundits stay busy with all kinds of stories about politics, they keep detouring around a central tilt of the national legislature's upper chamber.

Like the "purloined letter" openly displayed in a famous tale by Edgar Allan Poe, the Senate's huge structural flaw is right in front of us all the time—but we don't see it as anything more than an eternal legacy of the nation's political heritage.

The past has ways of enduring. Today, in the 100-member Senate, cattle may be more equitably represented than people.

For instance, Montana—with a total of 902,195 residents, according to the 2000 census—has a pair of U.S. senators. So does California, with a population of 33,871,648.

In other words, less than 1 million people in Montana have as much representation in the United States Senate as more than 33 million people in California.

Voters who live just a few miles apart can wield vastly different amounts of leverage in Senate races. If a citizen moved across the border from Pennsylvania (pop. 12,281,054) to Delaware (pop. 783,600), the impact of his or her ballot would increase by a factor of about 15.

A combined total of nearly 40 million people live in the states that rank second and third in population, Texas and New York. They get four senators. Meanwhile, a total of scarcely more than 1 million people live in Vermont and Wyoming. They, too, get four senators.

Of course, there are historic explanations. Back in 1787, small states wanted safeguards against being out-muscled in Congress by big states. But what began as a realpolitik deal to get the Constitution of the United States ratified is now, more than 200 years later, largely an anachronism that cuts against high-flung rhetoric about American democracy.

In the mid-1960s, the U.S. Supreme Court finally put a stop to the similarly skewed distribution of seats in more than a dozen state legislatures, where it often seemed that apportionment was based on acreage or cows rather than human beings. Those imbalances had the effect of devaluing ballots cast by people who lived in urban areas.

The nation's highest court ruled that such undemocratic setups were unconstitutional, violating the principle of one person, one vote. But the ongoing comparable arrangement for the U.S. Senate is—by definition—constitutional. It's a built-in barrier to de-

mocracy, enshrined in Article I, Section 3.

Sure, the two-senators-per-state formula was satisfactory to the framers of the Constitution. By the way, they were the same fellows who went along with slavery and confined voting rights to certain white males. They were also the same guys who stipulated that U.S. senators had to be chosen by state legislatures instead of by direct election—an arrangement that persisted until the adoption of the 17th Amendment in 1913.

The 2000 census found that 10 states —(California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey and Georgia) had an aggregate population of 152 million people. They get the same representation in the U.S. Senate as the total of 8.3 million people who live in the 10 least-populated states (Wyoming, Vermont, Alaska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Delaware, Montana, Rhode Island, Hawaii and New Hampshire).

Such disparities are increasing. All of the eight states that gained more than 1 million in population between 1990 and 2000 are among the 25 most populous states. As the population gaps between states continue to widen, so do the inequalities of Senate representation.

But this is not important to news media—for reasons that are both understandable and disturbing. A predominant view is that the matter was settled back in the late 18th century.

When I called David E. Rosenbaum, a *New York Times* reporter on the Senate beat, he commented that disproportionate allocation of Senate seats is not a present-day media concern "for the same reason that we don't write about what happened to the Indians." He added: "The Founding Fathers set it up this way on purpose. It's not news." And Rosenbaum could not resist a bit of sophisticated sarcasm: "This is a really really big issue about 225 years ago."

True, the flagrantly undemocratic structure of the Senate is not an issue today. But maybe it should be. KK

By Norman Solomon

Norman Solomon is executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy, a nationwide consortium of public-policy. His latest book is "The Habits of Highly Deceptive Media." His syndicated column focuses on media and politics.

Voters who live just a few miles apart can wield vastly different amounts of leverage in Senate races. If a citizen moved across the border from Pennsylvania (pop. 12,281,054) to Delaware (pop. 783,600), the impact of his or her ballot would increase by a factor of about 15.

Satellite Tracking Moves to Ships

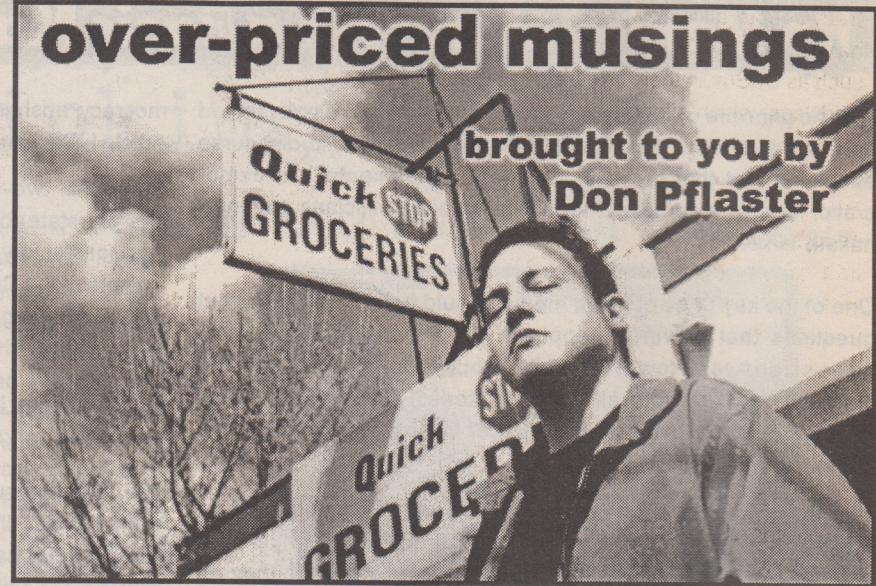
The greatest users of the Global Positioning System (GPS) are within the aviation industry. A close second are ocean going vessels, whose reliance on positioning is arguably more crucial, having almost no visual cues to know the location of their vessel while sitting on the ocean's surface. The GPS system allows people to know their exact position on the earth, and with recent advances, to within 10 meters, given ideal conditions.

Generally, such a system is passive, using a receiver to pick up the vergence of signals from a constellation of satellites in Earth's orbit. However, if one were required to obtain a system that not only received but also *transmitted* signals, the system could be tracked by satellite quite easily.

The watchful eye of government is now turning to the sea in the form of such GPS transmitters. Promised to usher in a new era of security and safety, there will soon be a mandatory tracking system imposed on all commercial vessels traveling the St. Lawrence Seaway. Operation of the St. Lawrence is jointly controlled by the United States and Canada, and connects the Atlantic Ocean to all of the Great Lakes via 1,400 miles of river, utilizing a system of locks. It is a major channel of commerce with dozens of major ports, allowing such cities as Milwaukee, Chicago, Cleveland, Montreal, and Toledo access to the sea.

The Seaway's new tracking system, called the Automatic Identification System (AIS), is now in final testing and will be deployed at the beginning of the 2003 navigation season. Hailed as a new era of security and safety, the system will offer unprecedented government control over the channel from three tracking stations, and will be able to know the position of every ship in every kind of weather. It will offer better scheduling of ship movement through the locks, and better ship-to-ship communications as well, allowing ships to more easily avoid collisions.

Though this system has been in the making for about a decade, one must wonder if the process was not recently pushed along with the advent of terrorism on U.S. soil. Millions of cargo containers entering U.S. ports go uninspected, sending jitters up the



spines of legislators sworn to protect their citizens against whatever nasty items might be smuggled inside them.

Aside from the traditional contraband cargo of drugs and illegal immigrants, the more pressing concern about the contents of cargo containers are terrorism-related. Radiological, chemical, or biological weapons are what the U.S. is exhaustively looking for now. The only way to prevent weapons of mass destruction or terrorists themselves from entering the country through the seaway is to thoroughly inspect all suspicious container ships leaving or entering.

We are far from such across-the-board inspection—currently only 2% of all containers are inspected. But this trial run on the St. Lawrence River will serve as a test case for future implementations, as the jurisdictions using such a system will likely be broadened in the future. There is currently a proposal pending before the United Nations' International Maritime Organization (IMO) to put in place a new system that will track all vessels worldwide by 2008. The United States recently asked the UN to bump it up to January 2004, but was met with resistance.

Imposing such broad inspections on commercial traffic is probably a good idea to safeguard our vulnerable ports. However, many times in the past we have observed the phenomenon of "function creep," or the evolution of a good idea into a monstrously larger bad one.

Once active satellite tracking of all ocean vessels is put into place and increases the effectiveness of security dozens of times over, the technology may move to land-based shipping and transportation, such as commercial trucks and buses. After all, in these times of terror, trucks are often inspected at the entrances to major bridges and tunnels. Wouldn't it be nice to divert those human resources somewhere else and let a computer alert us to when an unregistered truck tries to cross a major thoroughfare? And wouldn't we all be safer if we had the government looking after private citizens with a mandatory satellite-based vehicle tracking system?

Early adopters already have such systems such as OnStar in their Cadillacs, which allow authorities to know exactly where one is in the event of an emergency. Currently, such transmission of one's whereabouts by private citizens is voluntary. But tracking of people and their vehicles has uses by governments and industries that are being developed on an as-needed or as-desired basis, and once the usefulness of that information becomes apparent, mandatory tracking could soon extend to private citizens.

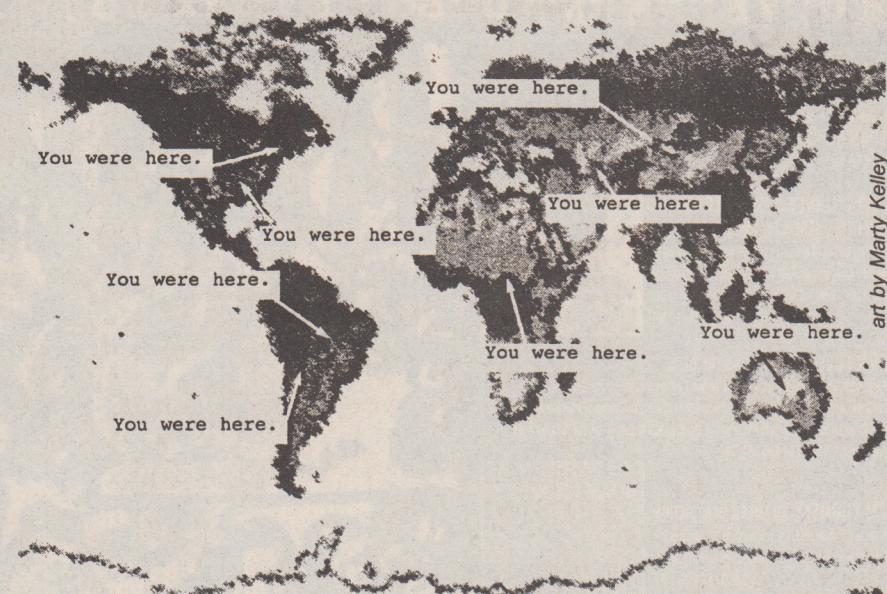
For instance, police have used records from the northeast's E-Z Pass toll collection system and New York's Metrocard system as circumstantial evidence in criminal cases to prove whereabouts of people at the time of crimes. Perhaps E-Z Pass could expand their powers to stop speeding motorists, or Metrocard could bind the currently anonymous card to someone's personal information.

Insurance companies in the future may refuse to insure a car if it does not contain a tracking device, or perhaps charge more money if they find that the driver spends too much time in areas where their car is more likely to be stolen.

Private investigators may use this information to track cheating significant others when records show they've driven to places inconsistent with their alibis. This information about social habits could also lead to politically damaging blackmail and extortion of individuals, making people reluctant to engage in politics out of fear.

Private industry might use behavioral data for matching against

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art by Marty Kelley

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previously established behaviors. This would further classify individuals into markets for more finely tuned advertising.

"The control of GPS tracking information will be a significant public policy issue several years from now," says Phil Agre, an associate professor of information studies at UCLA and a member of the board of the Electronic Privacy Information Center.

Once government and industry possess information not just about your buying habits (which they already

have) but your movements, things will get very hairy. If such intentions turn out to be benign, the very best thing that will happen will be a billboard tailor-made just for you that pops up on the side of the road as you drive by it. But dear God, I can't even begin to imagine the horrible possibilities if you ever make an enemy of the government.

There will be nowhere to hide from GPS except underwater, and I don't know anyone who's selling submarines cheap. KK

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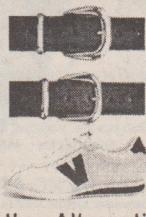
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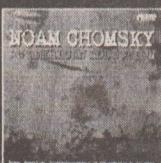
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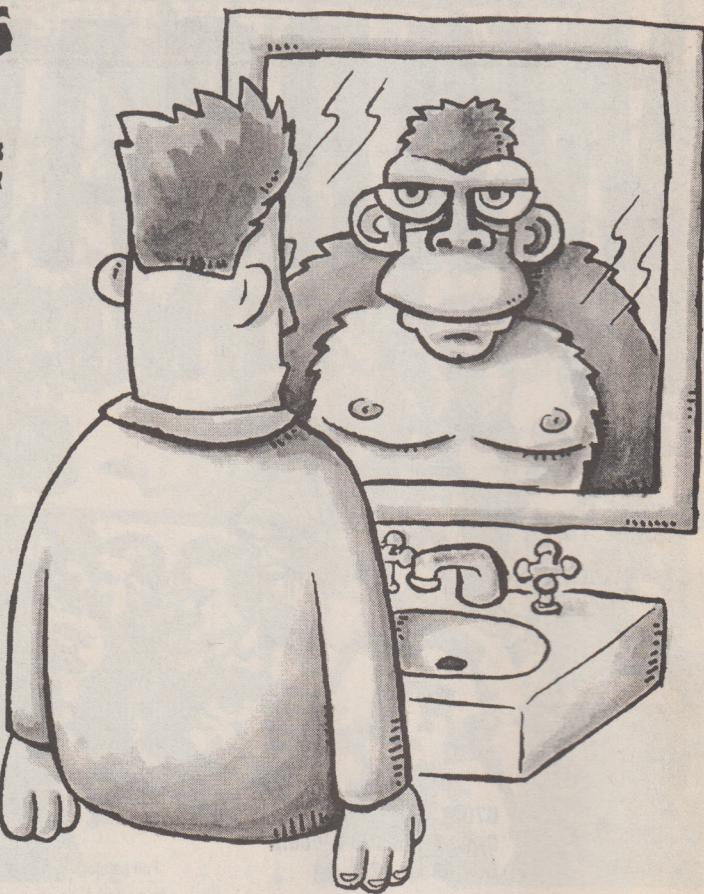
Animals Like Us: The Search for a Species Identity

by Dr. Steven Best

"The human spirit is not dead. It lives on in secret. I have come to believe that compassion, in which all ethics must take root, can only attain its full breadth and depth if it embraces all living creatures and does not limit itself to mankind." – Dr. Albert Schweitzer

Animals have always been central to human lives, in the best and worst ways. To begin with the obvious, we are animals and so we exist in a continuum with the nonhuman animals who are our evolutionary ancestors. We share physiology, genetics, and key behaviors; arguably, fundamental aspects of our ethics and family structures come from primates. So we are of the animals, not above them as presumed by the Western psychosis.

Throughout history, animals have been key to human beings not only as resources for food or clothing, but also religiously, spiritually, and philosophically. Animals are crucial figures in human mythologies: they are the stuff of animistic conceptions of the universe, Gods and Goddesses, totemic icons, and spirit guides. On the whole, they have brought the cosmos alive and made the earth something less than a barren, lonely planet. The existential solitude of humans on the earth without animal companions is one of the fascinating themes explored in Philip K Dick's sci-fi novel, *Do*



art by Eric Spitzer

Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? (which very loosely was the basis for the screenplay for the 1982 film *Blade Runner*). Thoreau's statement, "In wilderness is the preservation of the world," should be understood not only in the literal sense of maintaining the natural world and its life forms from being devoured by technocapitalism, but also in the philosophical sense that our humanity depends on sustaining an intimate relationship with nature.

"For as long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other. Indeed, he who sows the seed of murder and pain cannot reap joy and love." – Pythagoras

In areas of the world such as India, of course, animals still have spiritual significance, and Eastern religions do not sharply separate human and nonhuman animals. But the historically dominant interpretation of the Christian religion has constructed an ontological cleavage, and in the Western world, animals have been treated mainly as objects of exploitation, profit-making, and even targets upon which to release pathological forms of hatred and aggression, making cruelty a magnifier of human identity. Thus, we have related to animals primarily in two ways: as sacred be-

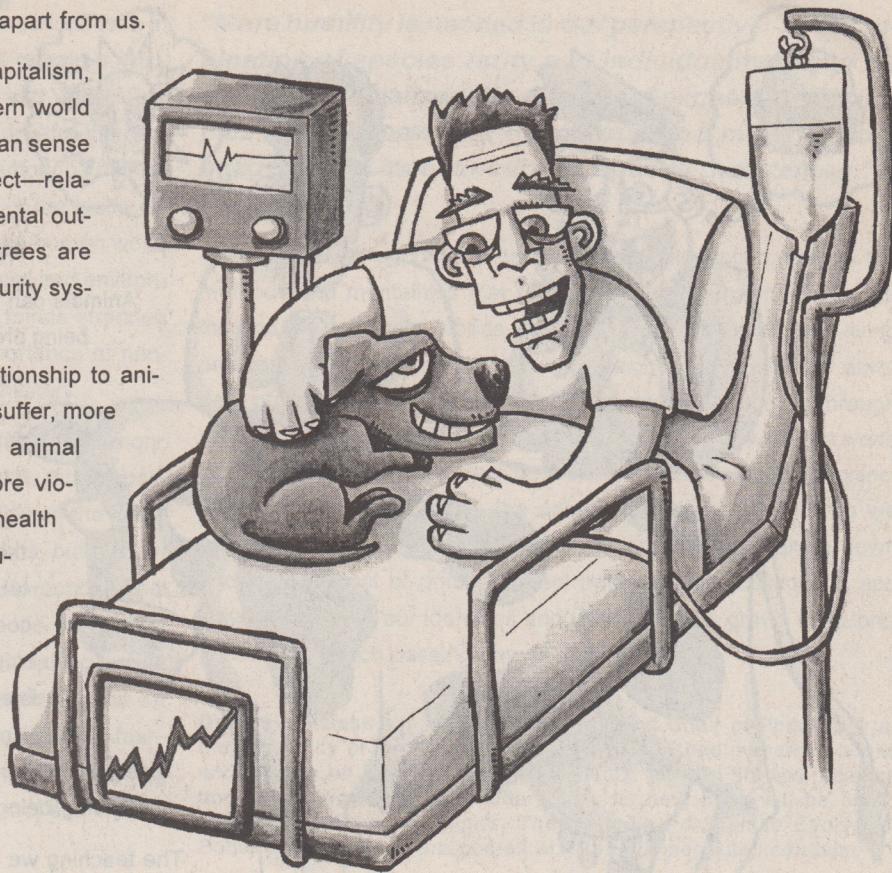
ings akin to us and as instrumental resources apart from us.

Because of a long history of speciesism and capitalism, I hazard to guess that most people in the Western world today have no caring or spiritual—in the best pagan sense of that term to mean connectedness and respect—relation with animals or nature as a whole. Instrumental outlooks frame the view of the world, such that trees are timber, cows are hamburgers, and dogs are security systems tied to a backyard chain.

But when human beings replace a caring relationship to animals with an exploitative relationship, they too suffer, more than they ever realize. As a consequence of animal slaughter and abuse, human beings bring more violence into their families and communities; their health deteriorates; and they severely degrade the natural environmental—squandering valuable resources such as food, water, and land in a grossly inefficient system of food production; destroying grasslands, riverbeds, and rainforests; polluting water systems; and heating up the planet through global warming.

But more happens. Human beings become morally impaired and spiritually handicapped. They need animals and the natural world for their psychological growth. Ecological philosopher Paul Shepard has explored the importance of the relation between human and nonhuman life. He claims that concrete relationships with animals were crucial for the healthy psychological development of human beings as individuals and as a species. In works such as *The Tender Carnivore and the Sacred Game*, Shepard argues provocatively that as a consequence of human alienation from animals, a breach that began ten thousand years ago with the decline of hunting and gathering society and the emergence of agricultural society, human psychological growth became severely retarded, and the "ontogeny" of infant development no longer recapitulates the "phylogeny" of species evolution.

For Shepard, "the human mind needs [wild animals and plants in their natural habitats] in order to develop and work. Human intelligence is bound to the presence of animals." Instead, humanist ideologies arrogantly presume order and meaning are generated through history alone and define "progress" as proportional to the extent humanity untangles itself from the chaos of nature to create the empires of culture. Humans clearly have their own trajectory, but the only successful way to negotiate their identities is through a complex interplay with the "otherness" of animals. One of the most crucial failures of modern "education" and of psychological understanding itself is to recognize the need to ritually bond with wild nature during childhood and adolescence. The consequences

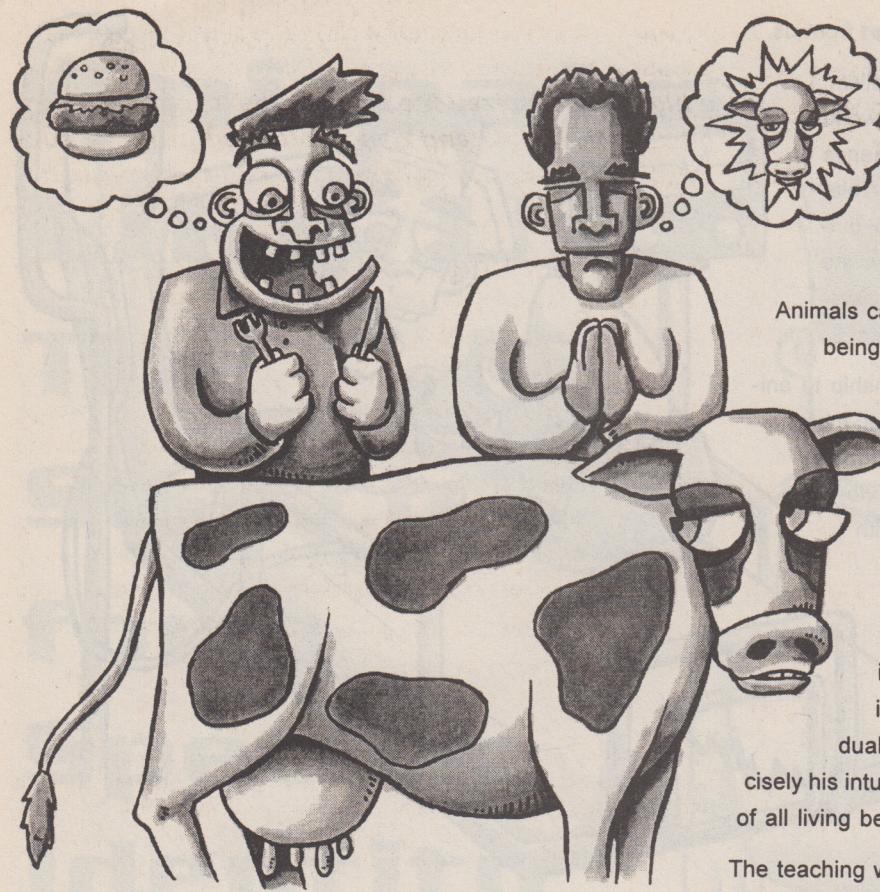


of this skewed development unfold throughout the general landscape of human insanity.

"But if you have no relationship with the living things on this earth, you may lose whatever relationship you have with humanity." — Krishnamurti

One need not embrace Shepard's atavistic call to return to the primitive past or his romanticization of hunting and gathering to probe his main question: What happens to the human psyche when people oppress and abuse animals? Among other things, human beings block channels of love and empathy, they inhibit capacities for care and compassion, and they thwart greater sources of identification that bring spiritual awakening and growth.

Human beings can survive without caring relations, but they cannot flourish. Humanity needs to give and to receive love and recognition. The fundamental quest in every human life not fixated on survival is for love and wholeness. Human beings cannot attain this through separation and alienation, and they must learn that their spiritual quest ultimately must be deepened beyond the human species into a connectedness with nonhuman animals and the natural world. For harmony with other humans in conditions of alienation from the natural world still leaves a huge existential vacuum and a looming socio-environmental catastrophe.



Consider for a moment how animals add immeasurable value to one's life. I myself have 11 cats, and each one gives me a unique gift every day, a smile and subtle joy well worth the destruction they wreak on my furniture. It is worth pondering whether one can think of a time in one's life when learning, healing, growth, or awareness came through the assistance of an animal rather than a human. Two years ago, filmmakers James LaVeck and Jenny Stein made a powerful documentary film, *The Witness*, which shows how a Bronx construction worker named Eddie Lama underwent a spiritual transformation through the gift of love given to him by a cat. The same experience happened to the late animal rights activist Henry Spira, prompting his shift from a human rights to an animal rights activist. Significantly, both men loathed cats before a particular individual feline won their hearts and transformed their consciousness.

In this case, as happens so often, the "angel of grace" came in the form of a whiskered being, not a God or human sage. But lest we conclude that the lessons come only from the beings our society privileges—cats and dogs—writers like Karen Davis and Lorri Bauston remind us that farmed animals like chickens, sheep, pigs, and cattle—arbitrarily positioned outside the boundary of moral and legal concerns—are every bit as much complex individuals who can touch and transform our lives, and these authors

tell profound stories indeed of their encounters with wonderful winged or hooved beings.

"Animals of the planet are in desperate peril. Without free animal life I believe we lose the spiritual equivalent of oxygen." – Alice Walker

Animals can play various crucial roles in our lives, including being profound teachers and healers. We think we teach animals things, but we forget the most important thing is what they teach us, if we allow them. Animals can teach us patience, happiness, courage, simple joys, and love—unconditional love. When we learn to love beyond the human barrier, when we grasp our fundamental similarities with nonhuman animals, we become aware of the deep unity of all life. This realization is the basis for a profound awakening and it is exhilarating in its liberation from the psychosis of dualism. The enlightenment of Buddha involved precisely his intuitive grasp of the unity of life, and that the suffering of all living beings merited our compassion.

The teaching we receive from animals is also healing. It is well-known that they can reach violent, autistic, or asocial children in a way humans cannot; that having companion animals helps to lower stress and blood pressure and elevate levels of happiness; that animals can speed healing in the sick and make the difference between life and death in the elderly.

Most importantly, animals can heal our broken connections to nature. As science shows, reality is whole, not broken; separation is not the true mode of being or a sustainable or viable existence. In one sense, connection to animals is more important than connection to human beings, because animals bring us closer to the natural world. We can never experience true wholeness and the interconnectedness of life until we transcend the limitations of our species boundaries and grasp our fundamental interconnectedness with other beings and the whole of nature. The awakening to connectedness and compassion is central to moral and spiritual development because it takes us beyond the prison of the Ego and even species perspective into a larger realm of life and identification. Compassion is a way of knowing, unmediated by distinctions of any kind.

"Where there is disharmony in the world, death follows." – Ancient Navajo saying

We might someday attain Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of a "worldhouse," a global community of peace and justice. But until

we radically alter our relations to our nonhuman companions in the journey of evolution, King's worldhouse will remain a vast, bloody slaughterhouse operated by a stunted and violent humanity. King's dream would be a nightmare, not only for the tens of billions of animals butchered each year for glutinous human consumption (certainly in the advanced sectors of the globe organized around fast food empires), but also for the human world itself, as it remains plagued by a vast array of social and environmental problems that perplex and bewilder the minds stranded in myopic humanist paradigms wherein the importance of non-human nature for human social life remains a mystery.

Animals are central to the solution to the riddle of human history, to its evolutionary trajectory, overall coherence, and ultimate possibilities. The future of this history depends not only on the rejection of global capitalism in favor of planetary justice, but also on the emergence of a new sensibility that devolves around animal rights, environmental ethics, and reverence for life. Instead of embarking on the current disastrous project of remaking nature through genetic engineering, we ought to be developing the far more sane and profound goal of remaking ourselves, in a fashion that restores the connection between humanity and humility, between economy and ecology, between the laws of society and the "laws" of nature.

"More humility is needed in our perspective. The combination of species rarity and individuality based on a highly specialized life cycle and exceedingly complex brain is new and dangerous and may not succeed; indeed its extinction is already threatening." – Paul Shepard

This view is not opposed to technological intervention, only to the methods and mentalities that fail to promote the harmonization of the natural and social worlds. Besides, our interference with living processes has been so great that to simply stop now would abrogate our need to restore and repair the damage, such as through replanting the forests and reintroducing wolves to the wild. In a world of global warming, rainforest destruction, massive species extinction, and hyper-barbarism, the animals need us as much as we need them. But where interspecies dynamics are breaking down under the impact of driftnets, steel traps, gunfire, bulldozers, and knives and forks, our identities and very existence grows more precarious with each passing day. □

Dr. Steven Best is Associate Professor and Chair of Philosophy at the University of Texas, El Paso. He has published numerous books and articles on the topics of social theory, cultural studies, science and technology, and postmodernism. His next book will be *Moral Progress and Animal Rights: The Struggle For Human Evolution*. Some of his writings are posted at <http://utminers.utep.edu/best/>

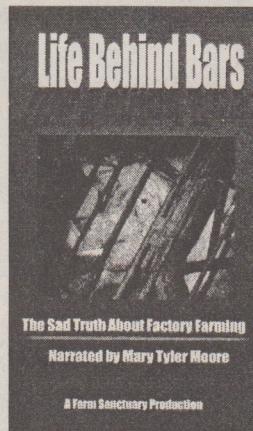
Video Review: Farm Sanctuary's "Life Behind Bars"

by Craig Mazer

Farm Sanctuary's most recent video, "Life Behind Bars," is a quick (just over 13 minutes), effective look at the plight of factory-farmed animals, specifically pigs, chickens and veal calves. Mary Tyler Moore narrates and hosts the video, lending a familiar face and a convincing, heartfelt voice.

Factory farms are a disease plaguing the world. They turn animals into tools for production, removing any aspect of the animals' sentient nature. This video takes a look at the factory farming procedures used for pregnant pigs (gestation crates), egg-laying hens (battery cages) and calves (veal crates). Using undercover footage, it's hard to ignore the message this video is trying to make: these are cruel procedures, already banned by other countries, and we must push for them to be banned in the United States.

Countering the stark, gut-wrenching footage of hens being ripped from cages and calves too weak to stand is heartwarming video of farm animals in a natural environment, with room



to roam and play and the chance to have a social structure and stay with their offspring.

The contrasting of the factory farm scenes and the roaming animals is powerful. With Mary Tyler Moore's compassionate voice narrating, this video is highly successful at getting the viewer to recognize and embrace the battle we face to get this cruelty stopped.

The video is worthwhile for both current animal rights activists and those who need a little convincing about the situation facing factory-farmed animals. Animal rights activists will find themselves armed with a strong video message they can take to the streets, while the yet unconverted will find themselves enlightened. □

"Life Behind Bars" is available for \$10 from Farm Sanctuary's web site (www.farmsanctuary.org) or write:

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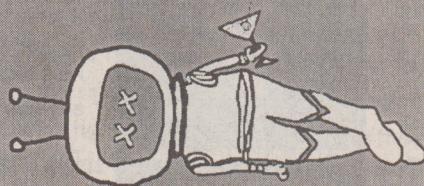
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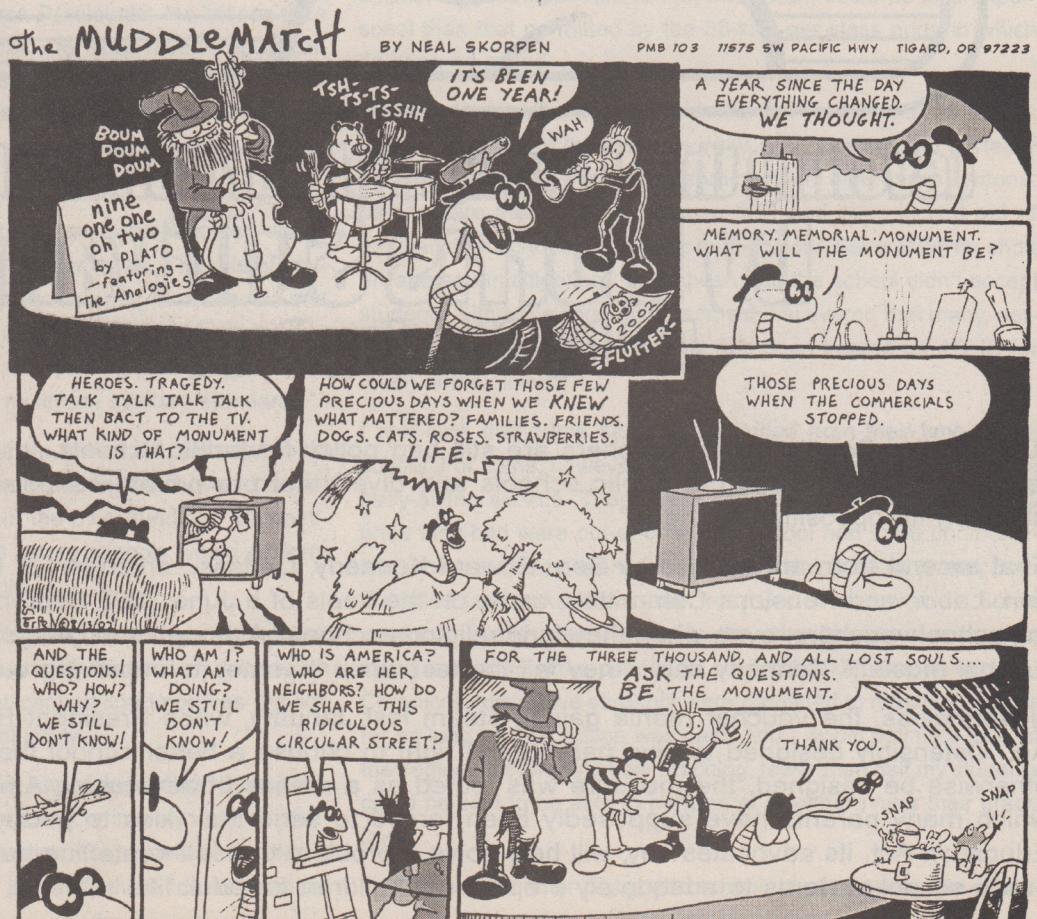
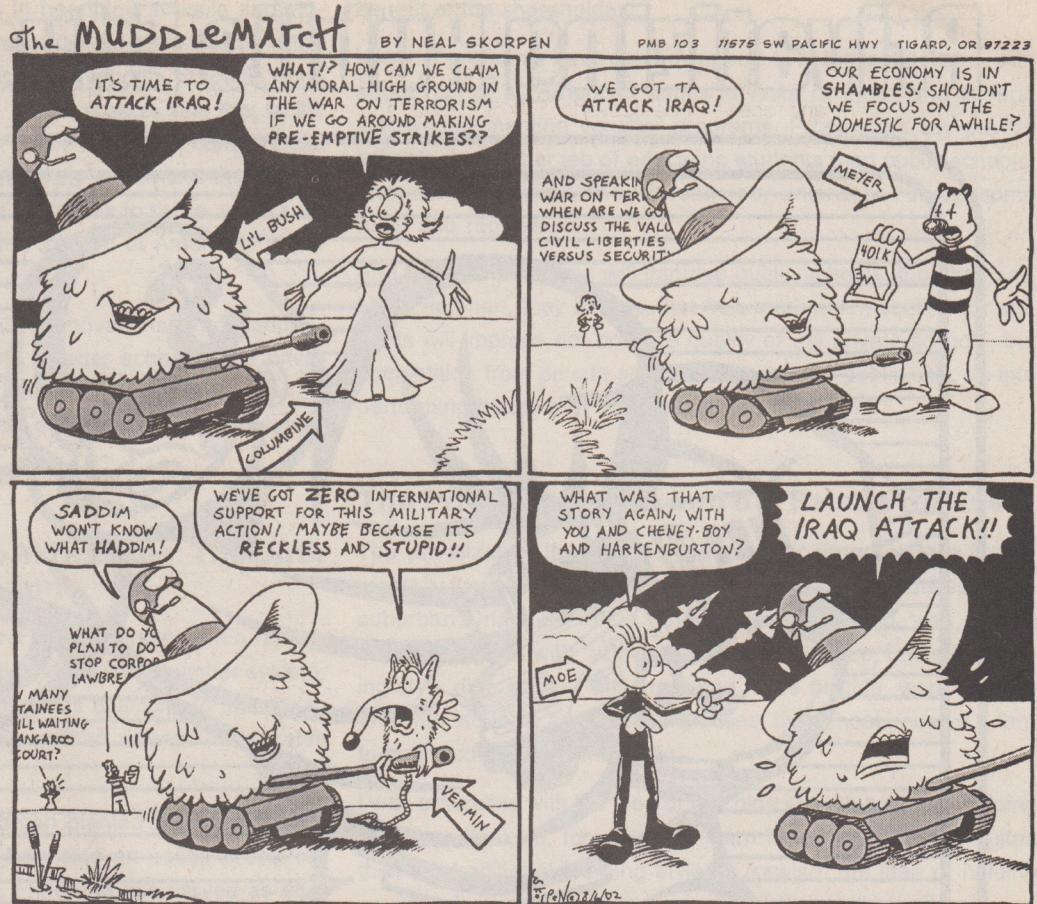
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Privatizing Public Education:



Leveling the Playing Field or Political Football? by Morris Sullivan Art by Charley Deppner

"Despite the Court's ruling, vouchers are still bad policy for public schools. It's flat wrong to take scarce taxpayer dollars away from public schools and divert them to private schools...and Congress must not abandon its opposition to them."

That excerpt from an address by Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, came on the heels of a June 2002 Supreme Court decision supporting school vouchers, even when they fund religious schools. Although such voucher programs "pass Constitutional muster," Kennedy said, "they fail the test when it comes to improving our nation's public schools."

Nevertheless, the voucher mania gained steam last January, when President Bush signed the Education Act. Ostensibly designed to give parents the right to choose a better school than one their children might otherwise be assigned, the measure was touted as a means of addressing America's education crisis, in which many parents have supposedly been forced to send their kids to poorly-performing schools. The Education Act, its advocates say, will help solve a problem that is threatening our future: the inability of our public school systems to adequately prepare our children for adult life.

After stories about mass murders in heartland schools and violence in inner-city ones, many parents undoubtedly welcome the opportunity to move their students to better schools. In reality, however, the legislation is an exercise in obfuscation, one that tacitly puts the Federal stamp of approval onto a number of controversial schemes and trends that could potentially undermine the educational careers of the very children it professes to serve, while subsidizing "designer" education for the children of America's upper classes.

Meanwhile, of course, these so-called innovations in education—tuition vouchers for private schools, charter schools, and privatized public schools—have grown into a handy stump from which mainly Republican politicians can deliver self-congratulatory speeches.

From Milton Friedman to Milwaukee: The Birth of School Voucher Programs

In 1990, Wisconsin became the first state to implement a revolutionary new concept when it established a tuition voucher system. In such a system, public money becomes available to parents to pay for tuition at a private school. Since then, several other states have followed Milwaukee's lead.

Free-market apologist Milton Friedman planted the seed for the voucher fad in the 1950s, when he wrote an essay proposing public funding for private schools. Friedman has served as economic advisor to various Republican Presidents; his laissez-faire economic theories served as the basis for such failed Republican philosophies as Reagan's famous "supply-side" economics and "trickle-down theory," not to mention the naively economic-utopian theories that pepper the conversation at a typical libertarian kaffeeklatsch.

With vouchers, Friedman suggested, free market forces would pressure schools into performing at higher levels. The role of government, he wrote, "would be limited to assuring that schools met certain minimum standards such as the inclusion of a minimum content in their programs, much as it now inspects restaurants to assure that they maintain certain minimum sanitary standards."

While the government would pay the tuition bill, parents could choose which school their child would attend, which would in turn determine which schools would get the most funding. Competition for students, therefore, would insure schools would perform at a higher level than public schools.

Alas, few things are as sad as a crusading, ivory-tower economist; and few things as destructive as a society that naively follows his advice. Anyone who believes that competition improves service hasn't visited a fast-food restaurant lately.

Every organization, public or private, has stakeholders. Stakeholders include customers, the surrounding community, and employees. However, in a private organization, the main stakeholder is the shareholder. The organization is mainly there for the financial

benefit of the shareholder.

Voucher programs have gained support over the last decade, with about half of all American adults in favor of them, and several states implementing voucher programs. Proponents say private schools do a better job of educating students than public schools. They are unencumbered by bureaucracy, unions, and burdensome rules and regulations.

And voucher programs will improve public schools, too, they say. Like Friedman, they believe that free market competition for students will improve not only the quality of the private schools, but competition from private schools will pressure public schools into performing better, too, so all students will benefit.

The Private Premise and the False Promise

The privatization theories behind voucher programs are fundamentally flawed. A few years ago, I took a job at a private school in suburban Orlando, Florida. The school, I was told, was geared toward students with "above average intelligence, but with learning-style differences." Teachers had to be flexible, work one-on-one with students and in small classes; the school boasted a ten-to-one student-to-teacher ratio.

I was enthralled with the idea of teaching in such a school, helping nonlinear thinkers, for example, learn in ways that better suited their nontraditional learning styles. Likewise, the idea of holding smaller classes appealed to me; interaction could be less impersonal than that permitted by the 33-kids-per-class norm in which I'd been educated.

To my surprise, the school's practice fell far short of its theory. While a handful of my students were quite brilliant and perfectly met the "above average with learning style differences" criteria, others were there simply because they had been kicked out of several other schools for chronic misbehavior. Several fell far short of "average intelligence." I had been told the school didn't accept students with behavioral disorders, yet discovered that many, perhaps the majority, of my students had been treated for ADHD for much of their lives.

I feel sure that some students benefited from their time at the school. For some, however, the school served as little more than a baby-sitting service. There were few textbooks and most of the ones they had were out-of-date (the school had three photocopiers, where teachers spent a lot of time running illegal copies from outdated textbooks that came from God-knows-where). Some weeks, one math class (taught by the school's executive director) spent more time in the parking lot playing basketball than in class. Chronically disruptive students were permitted to remain in school for as long as their tuition was paid. And I would estimate that, at the beginning of my first year teaching, fewer than half my students could be said to be able to perform at anywhere near their grade level.

Yet this was no inner-city ghetto school. In most cases, the upper-

middle-class parents were paying up to \$6,000 per year for tuition.

(My experiences are chronicled in an article still online at Milwaukee's *Shepherd Express* web site: http://www.shepherd-express.com/shepherd/19/35/headlines/cover_story.html.)

Wisconsin was one of the first states to adopt a voucher program. It was also the first state to have a voucher controversy, when some of the voucher schools turned in less-than-stellar performances. In an article published last year, the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) examined the statistical evidence relating to private school performance during the past decade. (<http://www.weac.org/GreatSchools/Issuepapers/vouchers.htm>)

"In general, students who attend private schools achieve at slightly higher levels than do public school students," they found. "However, research has consistently shown that these differences are insignificant and primarily attributable to the fact that parents of private school students tend to have higher levels of education and higher levels of personal wealth." Further, they say, scores on the 1999 National Assessment of Educational Progress show that private school students performed no better than public school students.

Perhaps that's surprising, considering that private schools can pick and choose their students. Public schools typically take what they're given and do the best they can. Screening criteria at private schools normally include personal interviews, analyses of behavioral patterns, and academic history. Some schools even require students to take admissions tests.

The WEAC refers to a 1999 study by Carol Ascher and Richard Gray ("Substituting the Privilege of Choice for the Right to Equality", *Education Week*, June 2, 1999) on the effects of the private school selection process on academic performance: Voucher programs don't really give parents a choice of school, the study explains. "In reality, they give parents the option to be chosen by a private school." Religious schools, for example, have always kept a firm hand on both admissions and exits, they pointed out. Such schools use their screening criteria "to determine who enters and who remains...The fact these schools choose their students helps keep them high performing. Clearly, this is not the kind of choice that assists those students who have been failed by public schools and whose skills are lacking."

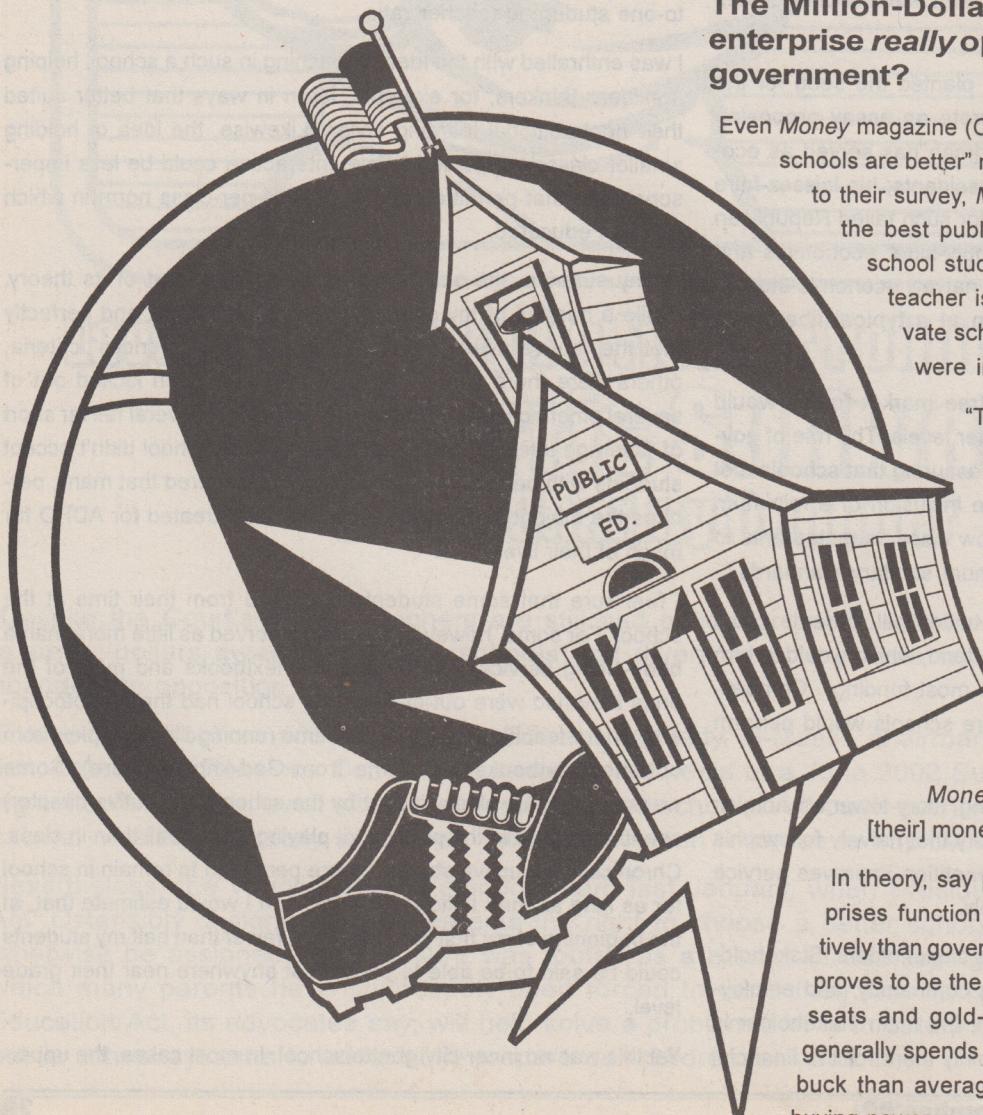
The Million-Dollar Question: Does private enterprise *really* operate more efficiently than government?

Even *Money* magazine (October, 1994) has deflated the "private schools are better" myth, the WEAC pointed out. According to their survey, *Money* reported that students attending the best public schools outperformed most private school students. Also, the average public school teacher is better qualified than the average private school teacher, and class size differences were insignificant.

"The best news to come out of *Money*'s survey...was that, by and large, public schools are not lacking in experienced topnotch teachers, challenging courses, or an environment that is conducive to learning. What many public schools are lacking is a student body brimming with kids eager to take advantage of what the school has to offer." Parents who send their kids to private schools,

Money concluded, "are probably wasting [their] money."

In theory, say proponents of vouchers, private enterprises function more efficiently and more cost-effectively than government bureaucracies. In fact, this rarely proves to be the case. The fabled thousand-dollar toilet seats and gold-plated hammers aside, government generally spends less money and gets more bang for its buck than average businesses, simply because of its buying power.



When it comes to education, economy of scale becomes a key factor. In 1998, when I taught in Orange County, it cost around \$4,200 to put a child through public school for one year. Tuition at secular private schools ranged from around \$5,000 per year to more than \$10,000, and some private schools required their students to purchase textbooks and pay lab fees.

Only the best and most expensive private schools offered the range of programs and extracurricular activities available at a run-of-the-mill public school. Only a small number of private schools offer bilingual services, programs for the handicapped, or vocational/technical programs, while public schools are required to offer such programs.

Some voucher proponents have posited that private schools can pay more and therefore attract better teachers. In Florida, at least, this didn't hold true in 1998, when I surveyed private schools and compared salaries to Florida Department of Education pay scales. A typical public school teacher in Florida makes less than \$30,000 per year (FLDOE "Statistical Brief, Florida's Nonpublic Schools"). Add benefits to that, and the total cost to the state is around \$35,000. As unimpressive as \$35,000 per year sounds, that typical teacher makes about thirty percent more than his private school counterpart.

No Child Left Behind: That is, as long as he's got a ride to school and a school to ride to.

The "No Child Left Behind" law requires school systems to find slots in better schools for children that want them, but gives them no means to create those slots.

The *New York Times* reported earlier this year that in Baltimore, for example, out of 30,000 kids eligible to transfer to better schools, 347 kids tried. (*New York Times*, Aug. 28, 2002) However, only 194 slots were available to them. In Los Angeles, with 223,000 kids crammed into 120 failing schools, there were no slots available for those wishing to transfer.

Even if there were slots available, many parents who could move their kids out of failing schools have chosen not to, simply because of transportation. Failing schools are consistently located in low-income areas, where students are raised in single-family households or where both parents work. Few of these parents have the resources to transport their kids to the other side of town for school. Even where transportation was offered, relatively few parents could take advantage of it, due to after-school issues.

Public Funding for Religious Schools: It's just like Sunday school, only it's Monday through Friday. If you do well on your quiz, you not only get a smiley face on your paper, but everlasting life, to boot.

Some opponents of voucher programs have argued that such programs fund religion, thus undermining first amendment protections. As mentioned above, however, the US Supreme Court ruled

in June that a school voucher program in Cleveland does not infringe upon the Constitutional separation of church and state, thus opening the door for religious schools to receive public funding.

The majority was a slim one: five justices voted in its favor; while four believed that paying for tuition at religious schools with vouchers was akin to using tax dollars to promote religion. In his dissenting opinion, for example,

Justice David Souter pointed out that public tax money would now teach "the covenant with Israel and Mosaic law in Jewish schools, the primacy of the Apostle Peter and the Papacy in Catholic schools, and the revelation of the Prophet in Muslim schools, to speak only of major religious groupings."

In Cleveland, nearly all families receiving tax-supported state tuition scholarships attend Catholic schools. Brenda Parks, nonpublic school specialist for the Florida Department of Education, told me that 90 percent of the private schools in Florida are church-affiliated. Further, a 1998 study by the National Center for Education Statistics said that of the 28,000 private schools in the US, one-third are Catholic. Half the 5 million students enrolled in private schools go to those Catholic schools.

The tuition cost at religious schools tended to be less than that at secular private schools, most of which charge more for tuition than would be covered by voucher amounts alone. Logically, then, one would assume that many of the voucher students who leave a failing public school will end up in a religious school.

Before I interviewed Parks, an acquaintance of mine had pulled her daughter out of public school and put her into the seventh grade at a school run by a fundamentalist Protestant church. While she was pleased with her child's improvement in "three R's" performance, she told me, she was surprised at some of the curriculum.

She had expected theology to be included in her kid's schoolwork. However, she was shocked to learn that the school's US Government curriculum consisted entirely of information about which politicians supported a religious-right agenda, and absolutely nothing about the workings of government.

Because of strong provisos in the Florida Constitution regarding the separation of church and state, Parks explained, religious schools are virtually unregulated. "Other private schools operate under an operational license issued by their county," she said. However, she added, there is little more regulation than there would

In theory, say proponents of vouchers, private enterprises function more efficiently and more cost-effectively than government bureaucracies. In fact, this rarely proves to be the case.

be for "a business delivering vegetables. In essence, [private schools] are in the business of delivering education."

With even less regulation and public accountability, then, religious schools are free to teach whatever they'd like, and to ignore whatever they'd like.

The Charter School Compromise: All the problems of an entire county public school system distilled into this one little classroom, and a pissed-off parent can fire the principal.

While some states have been slow to implement voucher programs, many now provide for charter schools. A charter school, in theory, is something of a compromise between public and private education. Such schools are organized by citizen groups, usually consisting of parents who feel that, for whatever reasons, a smaller, independently managed school will meet their children's needs better than a run-of-the-mill public school.

Technically, charter schools are public schools. Their budget comes from the state, usually on a per-student basis. How that money is spent, however, is determined by the school's board of directors, who also decide how the school will be operated.

Even the US Department of Education seems to have mixed feelings about charter schools. In its June, 2001 Study on Charter School Accountability, the department said, "Some charter schools have managed to produce acceptable student outcomes but are still a long way from creating strong internal accountability arrangements and stable working relationships between the governing boards and management."

Further, it said, "Only a few of the hundreds of...authorizing agencies have faced their own responsibilities in holding charter schools accountable." However, its analysis ends on a hopeful note, avowing that charter schools can work—it will just take time to iron out all the kinks in accountability.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation is less hopeful. Canadian provinces only recently began introducing charter school legislation, which is being "enthusiastically promoted by many of the same groups that have championed the weakening of other public institutions: right-wing think-tanks, governments, media and public figures," says the Federation's publication, "Ten Charter School Myths." (<http://www.ctf-fce.ca/E/WHAT/NI/CHARTER/myths.htm>)

Charter school programs are subject to many of the same problems inherent in voucher programs, the study revealed. Data drawn from programs in the US, Britain, and New Zealand indicates that transportation logistics, the use of selection criteria for choosing students, and an increasing reliance on "donations" from parents—which it dubs "thinly-veiled tuition"—all undermine the "choice" concept.

"Charter schools siphon off funding from the public system, siphon off the attention of school reformers, and siphon off the most concerned and articulate parents," the Canadian study adds. Charter schools also siphon off the best students, leaving behind the

lower achievers in neighborhood schools that, as they shrink and fail, will receive even less funding.

The study goes on to explode the myths that charter schools improve curriculum and performance, that academic results have been favorable, and that charter schools can level the playing field for students by allowing equal-access education. In fact, it says, there is "a lack of compelling evidence that entry into a choice school actually results in measurable achievement gains."

Statistics from New Zealand, they say, show that parent boards end up focusing on property and financing issues rather than on learning, principals spend less time on instruction-related tasks and much more on fundraising and marketing, and teachers' workloads have increased while morale has declined.

And rather than level the educational playing field in Britain, it adds, charter schools have helped increase "the inequalities in schooling and the segregation by social class."

Privatization: Put that pair of Golden Arches in front of the building—right there by the flagpole.

"Charter schools may be the 'thin edge of the wedge' to privatizing public schools," said the Canadian publication, which notes that US state charter laws allow for-profit corporations to enter into the education industry, with public assistance.

Such entrepreneurial experiments so far have produced less-than-favorable results, for either stockholders or students. For example, the Edison Project is the brainchild of entrepreneur Christopher Whittle, who also put Channel One into America's Schools. (see *IMPACT* press Aug.-Sep. 2001, "Education on the Auction Block." <http://www.impactpress.com/articles/augsep01/educationms80901.html>)

By the beginning of this school year, Edison had 75,000 students in 22 states, and had been hired to take over 20 schools and 15,000 students in Philadelphia. (*Boston Globe*, June 14, 2002) Yet this past summer, Edison's overstated revenue projections and other inaccuracies earned it a ruler across the back of the hand from the SEC. Its stock fell from \$38 per share to about a buck, and it took a \$40 million loan to bail it out of its financial woes. At least ten class action lawsuits have been filed against Edison, and the company has fallen under intense scrutiny for its inconsistent delivery of a quality educational product.

One of Edison's earliest privatization efforts, a takeover of an elementary school in Sherman, Texas, resulted in the school system allowing their contract to expire after four years. The community ended up paying Edison up to \$1 million per year more than they had intended, thanks to "hidden costs" in the contract.

The San Francisco school board has also yanked a charter from Edison; most of its teachers had quit by the end of its second year, and the school board had found evidence that the school had padded its performance record by weeding out students that were unlikely to perform well on standardized tests.

Cookies and Spam: Web Schools and Other Bad Ideas

The last decade has seen an ever-increasing number of children being home-schooled, perhaps as a response to parental fears about school violence and general hysteria about "failing" public schools. To capitalize on that trend, several Internet education companies have emerged, offering web-based curriculums to homeschooling parents.

Perhaps the most frightening issue to arise from this trend is the ability of unethical marketers to use Internet education as a doorway into the budding consumer's mind. This might sound paranoid, but something similar has already occurred in a larger-scale, institutional setting, when ZapMe! offered free computers to schools in exchange for the schools' commitment to funnel their students' Internet activities through the company's service network.

While researching the web, the students were constantly shown ads for ZapMe!-sponsoring products. At the same time, their research habits were monitored for market research—without their or their parents' knowledge or consent. (*IMPACT* press, "Education on the Auction Block").

Even were such devious marketing strategies to be outlawed, home-schooling and web-schooling are less-than-adequate means of educating young people. Again, parents are rarely the best judges of their children's educational needs. And perhaps more important, school is more than just a disseminator of curriculum. Time spent in the company of others and of peers is an important part of personality development. While some schools may not always be the most positive of social environments, hot-house isolation could easily cripple a child's social development.

In Conclusion: We deserve an educated America, and we're willing to pay the price.

Our government is constitutionally obliged to ensure America's children an education. We, as voters, have a moral responsibility to demand that our government provide not only an education, but a good education. A solid education is the bulwark of a free society,



and is critical to one that strives to have equality for its citizens.

Of course, some Americans don't have children, and others have already paid the property taxes and sales taxes that financed their own children's schooling, and resent having to pay for your child's.

However, we owe it to ourselves as a society to have an educated populace. We deserve coworkers, employees, and even the people that sell us hamburgers who can read, write, do basic math, and have the other fundamental skills they need to do their jobs competently. We deserve to live with others who have learned a little about history, about the arts, and about science, and have learned enough critical thinking that they can make informed decisions.

An American's education should include the best possible information. Not all parents want that for their children, unfortunately. Many are willing to have their children learn in school

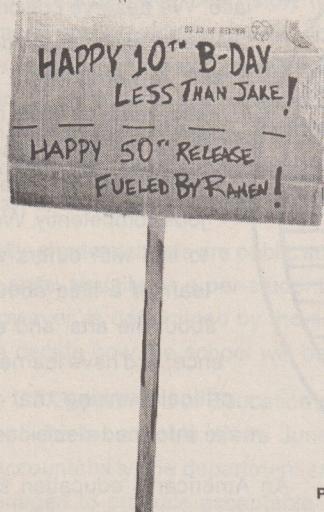
what they should learn, if at all, in church. Theories that do not stand up to scientific scrutiny, such as creationism, the existence of God and the "rightness" of Christianity have no place in public education.

Nor, for that matter, should we tolerate our children being farmed for their market potential while they should be learning their ABCs.

If we taxpayers are to pay for education, then we should insist that we get our money's worth. It's time we told our political and community leaders to stop kicking our kids around the school grounds with smokescreen ideas like charter schools and vouchers, and get them back into the public classroom. Evidence and common sense tell us the most reliable way to get the most bang for our buck is to invest in quality *public* education—to hire the best professional educators we can find and let them do their thing. ☀

Contributing Editor Morris Sullivan has written for Impact for more than five years. A freelance writer and former high school teacher living in DeLand, Florida, Sullivan is also a playwright. His most notorious work, *Femmes Fatale*, contained the infamous "Nude Macbeth," which has been covered by diverse news media from the BBC and NPR to *Playboy*, HBO's "Real Sex," and Comedy Central's *The Daily Show*.

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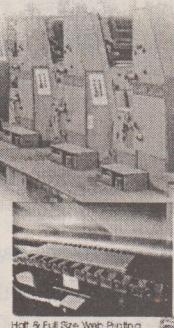
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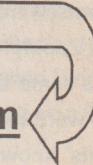
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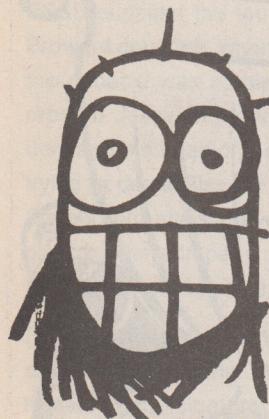
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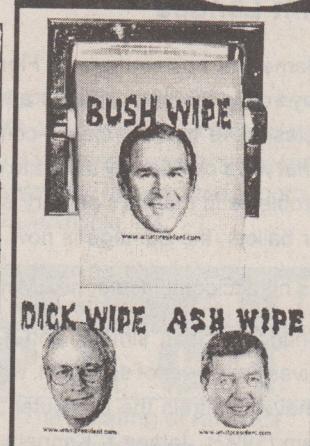
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Elections In America: Assume Crooks Are In Control

by Lynn Landes

Don't blame the poll workers in Florida. The facts, supported by voting machine experts and numerous newspaper articles, have made it clear—computerized voting machines that were certified by the state of Florida caused most of the problems in Florida's primary election. In the absence of paper ballots, the damage is now irreversible.

This was no accident. It's not new. And Florida is not alone.

"The concept is clear, simple, and it works. Computerized voting gives the power of selection, without fear of discovery, to whomever controls the computer," wrote the authors of *VoteScam* (1992), James & Kenneth Collier (both now deceased). It's a 'must read' book about how elections have been electronically and mechanically rigged in the United States for decades, and with the knowing and sometimes unknowing support of media giants and government officials, including, ironically, Janet Reno.

As far as we know, some guy from Russia could be controlling the outcome of computerized elections in the United States.

Only a few companies dominate the market for computer voting machines. Alarmingly, under U.S. federal law, no background checks are required on these companies or their employees. Felons and foreigners can—and do—own companies that sell computer voting machines. To protect their trade secrets, these companies demand that their clients sign a 'proprietary' contract, which prohibits a thorough inspection of the voting machines by outsiders. And, unbelievably, it appears that most election officials don't require paper ballots to back up electronic election results. So far, lawsuits attempting to allow complete access to inspect voting machines, or to require paper ballots so that recounts are possible, have failed.

As far as we know, some guy from



art by Greg Rebis

Russia could be controlling the outcome of computerized elections in the United States.

In fact, Vikant Corp., a Chicago-area company owned by Alex Kantarovich, formerly of Minsk, Belorussia (also known as White Russia, formerly U.S.S.R.), supplies the all-important 'control cards' to Election Systems & Software (ES&S), the world's largest election management company, writes reporter Christopher Bollyn ("Manufacturers Admit Voting Machines Unreliable", *Spotlight.org*, Nov. 13, 2000). According to ES&S, they have "handled more than 40,000 of the world's most important events and elections. ES&S systems have counted approximately 60% of the U.S. national vote for the past four presidential elections. In the U.S. 2000 general election, ES&S systems counted over 100 million ballots."

Kantarovich would not disclose where the control cards are made, except that they aren't made in America, writes Bollyn. Nor would he discuss his previous employment. Bollyn says he got some not-too-thinly-veiled threats from Kantarovich. Kantarovich sounds more like the Russian mafia than a legitimate businessman.

But the really big deal is this—all of ES&S's touch screen machines contain modems, "allowing them to communicate—and be communicated with—while they are in operation," reports Bollyn. That communication capability includes satellites. "Even computers not connected to modems or an electronic network can still be manipulated offsite, not during the election, but certainly before or after," says voting systems expert Dr. Rebecca Mercuri.

ES&S supplied the touch screens for Florida's Miami-Dade and Broward counties, where the worst machine failures occurred. But the debacle was nothing new for ES&S. Associated Press (AP) reporter Jessica Fargen wrote in June 2000, "Venezuela's president and the head of the nation's election board accused ES&S of trying to destabilize the country's electoral process. In the United States, four states have reported problems with equipment supplied by the company. Faulty ES&S machines used in Hawaii's 1998 elections forced that state's first-ever recount."

Sequoia is another voting systems company that sends a cold chill down my spine. "Mob ties, bribery, felony convictions, and threats of coercion are visible in the public record of the election services company, according to investigative journalist and filmmaker Daniel Hopsicker." ("Election Executive Convicted Of Bribery", Spotlight.org, Jan. 5, 2001) Hopsicker says that Pasquale "Rocco" Ricci, a 65-year-old senior executive with Sequoia, and the firm's Louisiana representative, recently pled guilty to passing out as much as \$10 million in bribes over the course of almost an entire decade. According to American Law Education Rights & Taxation (ALERT) Ricci is the president of Sequoia International, which also manufactures casino slot machines.

That's just great. Now, we could possibly have both the Russian mafia and the U.S. mafia involved in our elections.

In May 2002, Sequoia was bought by England-based company De La Rue. According to their web site, De La Rue is "the world's largest commercial security printer and papermaker, involved in the production of over 150 national currencies and a wide range of security documents such as travelers checks and vouchers. Employing almost 7,000 people across 31 countries, [De La Rue] is also a leading provider of cash handling equipment and software solutions to banks and retailers worldwide." As well, they develop technology for secure passports, identity cards, and driver's licenses.

Okay, add Dr. Evil to the mix and be on the lookout for international money launderers, drug kingpins, and Nazis.

Shoup Voting Solutions of Quakertown, Pennsylvania, has a reputation for rigging elections, wrote the late co-author of the book "VoteScam," Jim Collier. According to Collier, in 1979, Ransom Shoup II, the president of the firm, was convicted of conspiracy and obstruction of justice stemming from an FBI investigation of a vote-fixing scam involving the old-fashioned lever machines in Philadelphia.

These reports are just the tip of the iceberg. The numerous instances of U.S. voting systems error and fraud are documented in a 1988 report for the U.S. Commerce Department entitled, "Accuracy, Integrity, and Security in Computerized Vote-Tallying" by Roy G. Saltman, a computer consultant for the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Computer Systems Laboratory. Many other experts and observers have been warning and complaining about these problems for decades.

But complaints, warnings, reports, and books like "VoteScam," haven't deterred government officials like Pinellas County (Florida) Commissioner Calvin Harris and County Judge Patrick Caddell. They told the *St. Petersburg Times* in October 2001 that they were aware that all of the voting machine companies had "problems in their pasts." But, Harris said, "We have to look at this objectively and not get tied up into the emotions of, 'Some guy might be a crook.'"

Dear Commissioner Harris... when it comes to elections in America... assume crooks are in control... and then act accordingly. KK

Lynn Landes is a freelance journalist specializing in environmental issues. She's been a radio show host and a regular commentator for a BBC radio program. Lynn writes a weekly column which is published on her website www.EcoTalk.org and reports environmental news for DUTV in Philadelphia, PA.

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art by Charley Deppner

Invisible Casualties

By Paul Rogat Loeb

The ordeal of the trapped Pennsylvania coal miners may be yesterday's headlines, but for a moment, their lives seemed connected with ours. We imagined ourselves imprisoned underground as the water slowly rose and rescuers raced to break through. We hoped they could hang on, huddled together in the dark. Their deliverance seemed a miraculous reprieve, as if the World Trade Center attacks had somehow been averted. But it also made me wonder—while a president who had cut mine safety budgets embraced the men for the cameras—about those whose injuries and deaths are invisible, whose stories Disney will never tell.

How do we decide whose lives we should care about?

The miners aren't the only Americans who place themselves at daily risk in their jobs. In a typical year, six thousand workers die from fatal occupational injuries, and fifty thousand from occupational illnesses such as asbestosis, brown lung, and workplace-linked cancers. Six million get injured. We don't talk about these people much. Their lives are invisible, far from the media pundits. They're often the immigrants and the poor, those most disposable in our culture. Colorado Republicans even passed a law recently limiting workplace compensation for losing an arm to \$36,000, and \$2,000 for "serious permanent disfigurement." And when the Bush administration gutted ergonomics standards that took decades to craft, they assured us the consequences were minimal. The ergonomic standards would have required that employers correct demonstrably unsafe workplaces. They took ten years to put together and even had some Republican support.

Imagine, though, if the daily workplace deaths and injuries were front and center on the nightly network news. Imagine if we took each instance to heart, the way we did with the ordeal of the threatened miners. To be sure, their story had every conceivable element of drama—unlike workplace injury statistics. But most of us rarely even glimpse what it means to go in each day and jeopardize life and health to put food on the table, just as we see little of what it's like to struggle to get by without adequate health care, housing, or education. These stories get erased from our national consciousness before even surfacing, like the vanished history in George Orwell's *1984*. We never feel the weight of the shattered lives.

Distancing by invisibility happens even more with global life-and-death issues. Thirty thousand people die every day of hunger-related causes worldwide—the equivalent of nearly ten World Trade Center attacks. According to the respected hunger advocacy group Bread for the World, a yearly appropriation of \$13 billion would meet their basic health and nutrition needs and save their lives. That's about what America spends on pet food, or a thirtieth of Bush's \$400-billion-dollar defense budget. We could also cover this amount seven times with the yearly cost of the recent tax cuts for the wealthiest one in one hundred Americans.

But of course we don't do this. Instead, we pull back from every international aid program conceivable; When we do participate, we ensure that the global poor will pay so much for what they receive that many can not afford their basic needs. We do this, with barely a shred of real debate, in part so men like the Enron and WorldCom executives can keep every dollar they grab, deeming that privilege more important than the right of children to eat..

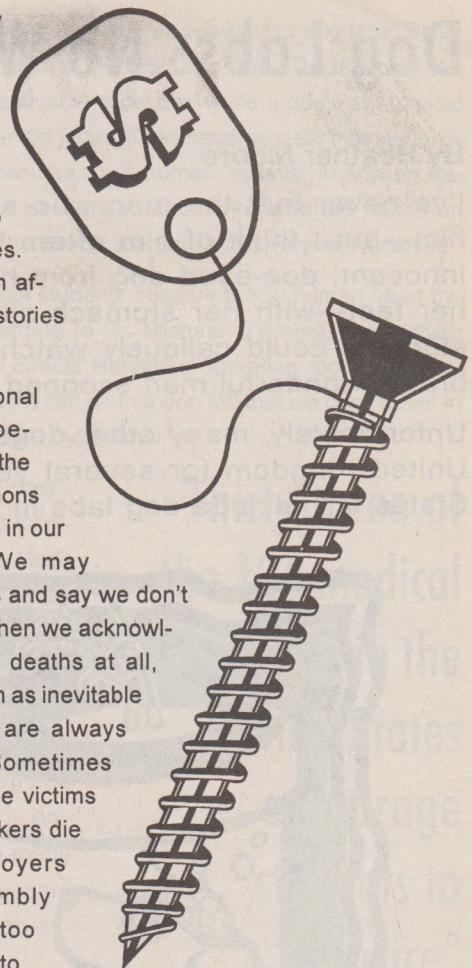
You'd think that so many preventable deaths would shock us. They might if we felt their full human impact. But we get little chance to do so. The Pennsylvania miners felt real to us, because we saw their families, heard their stories, and got a sense of them as human beings with lives as weighty, worthy, and complex as our own. They weren't just statistics. We don't get that close to those who starve halfway around the world. They remain faceless and anonymous, and our media and our political leaders choose not to make their lives a priority. Nor do most of us even glimpse the

daily risks taken by those who work dangerous and life-destroying jobs here at home. It's easier to not look too closely at their lives. Their stories seldom affect us the way the stories of the miners did.

Without this emotional connection, it becomes easy to deny the human toll of the actions we allow to be taken in our common name. We may shrug our shoulders and say we don't know what to do. When we acknowledge the needless deaths at all, we'll often treat them as inevitable tragedy: "Children are always dying in Africa." Sometimes we'll even blame the victims for their fate. If workers die because employers speed up assembly lines, work them too many hours, or fail to repair dangerous machines, they must simply have been careless. It's a little harder to do this with dying children, but we have no shortage of critics who blame the moral character of countries whose treasuries have been drained dry by years of Western-supported dictators and crippling debt payments. As psychologist Edward Opton once wrote about America's rationalizations for the My Lai massacre, "It didn't happen and, besides, they deserved it."

The courage of the Pennsylvania miners and of their rescuers rightly inspires us. But their story should also lead us to ask some difficult questions. How are we connected with our fellow human beings, including those who risk their health and lives for our benefit? What does it mean to make so many people routinely expendable in the name of progress, the market, and the American way of life? What would it take to treat the stories of all whose lives are needlessly jeopardized as seriously as we did these trapped miners? These may not be easy questions to answer. But if we value the lives of these men who we thought were lost but now, astonishingly, are saved, these are questions we ought to start asking. ¶

Paul Loeb has written for the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Utne Reader*, *Mother Jones*, *Salon*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*, and is the author of *Soul of a Citizen: Living With Conviction in a Cynical Time* (St Martin's Press, www.soulofacitizen.org), *Generation at the Crossroads: Apathy & Action on the American Campus*, *Nuclear Culture*, and *Hope in Hard Times*.



Dog Labs: No Way to Treat "Man's Best Friend"

By Heather Moore

I've never met the man who saved my dog's life. I don't know his name or anything about him—but I think of him often. He was compassionate and courageous enough to rescue an innocent, doe-eyed dog from his physiology class, where she was about to be tied down by her feet—with her stomach sliced open and her rib cage exposed—so that undergraduate students could callously watch her die. She was just minutes away from death when that brave, wonderful man scooped her up and walked out the door.

Unfortunately, many other dogs aren't so lucky. Although "dog labs" have been illegal in the United Kingdom for several years, many medical and veterinary universities in the United States still include dog labs in their curricula.



Medical Malpractice

Hippocrates' Oath, "First, do no harm," is the credo of the medical profession, yet many students are taught to harm—not heal—the very first "patients" they ever encounter. Each year, thousands of dogs are strapped to tables and cut open so that medical students can view their hearts under a variety of conditions.

Thirty-three of the 126 medical schools in the United States encourage students to "practice" surgery on dogs first. Although the most prestigious medical universities, such as Harvard, Stanford, Yale, Columbia, and Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, have abandoned cruel animal laboratories, Georgetown University School of Medicine, New York Medical College, Brown University School of Medicine, and many others, continue to use archaic dog labs to train medical students.

Inexperienced students are encouraged to perform painful, invasive surgeries or inject various drugs to make the dogs' hearts beat faster or their muscles contract. Although given anesthesia, many dogs "wake up" during sloppy, improperly handled procedures. Last year, for example, students who were responsible for monitoring anesthesia at Louisiana State University Medical School admitted that they had "no clue" what they were doing and, as a result, dogs who had their chests sawn open and their hearts fibrillated and de-fibrillated,

awoke and began crying out in pain. At least 80 dogs died miserably and the complainants found the experience to be "unnecessarily damaging."

The Shame of Shelters

Many of the dogs used in these horrific labs were once trusting companions who simply got lost—or stolen—from their families. Animal shelters in certain states are required to turn over homeless dogs to government-run facilities for medical experiments if they are not claimed by former or new guardians within 5 days of arriving at the shelter. This is commonly known as pound seizure.

Thousands of dogs are strapped to tables and cut open so that medical students can view their hearts under a variety of conditions.

in shelters, friendly, playful dogs have a chance of being adopted into loving homes. Those who aren't so fortunate are quickly and painlessly euthanized—not confined, traumatized, and experimented on.

Helping Not Harming

There are more effective, relevant, and humane ways to learn about human anatomy and physiology than by studying canine anatomy. Students can gain valuable experience by observing and human procedures assisting (under very close supervision), as well as by studying cadavers, state-of-the-art computer simulators, CD-ROMS, models, videotapes, and textbooks. These options are less expensive than dog labs and allow for a variety of uses and repeated practice.

The Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services (MIEMSS) in Baltimore has reported that 95 percent of students rate labs

using cadavers and other alternatives superior to dog labs. Philip Militello, M.D., an instructor at MIEMSS confirms, "The anatomy of a cadaver human is identical to a patient, while a dog's anatomical landmarks differ. Over the years, it has become clear that students enjoy doing the procedures on a human cadaver specimen because of the identical scenarios, landmarks, and the hands-on experience. It mirrors the clinical scenario and is very well received."

Harvard Medical School students observe actual human heart bypass surgeries. According to Dr. Michael D'Ambra, the cardiac anesthesiologist who directs Harvard's operating room program, "The only thing a student can do in a dog lab that we don't cover in the operating room is kill the animal.

Neal Barnard, M.D., president of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) in Washington, D.C., believes that, "Medical students learn more about human physiology and pharmacology from studying human patients undergoing necessary surgeries... Animal labs don't teach medical procedures that prepare students to see human patients."

According to PCRM, medical institutions throughout the U.S., including Boston University School of Medicine, Indiana University

School of Medicine, Duke University School of Medicine, the University of Florida College of Medicine, the University of South Florida College of Medicine, and many others, do not have live animal laboratories.

Thirty-three of the 126 medical schools in the United States encourage students to "practice" surgery on dogs first.

A Dog For A Dog?

There would be an international outcry if a medical professor suggested that he or she needed to kill healthy children in order to learn how to cure sick children, yet there is far less criticism when veterinary professors insist that students must kill healthy animals in order to learn to cure sick ones.

Britain and several other European countries forbid veterinary students to conduct lethal animal experiments, yet several American veterinary colleges allow "terminal surgeries." In fact, many schools, such as Oregon State University, Iowa State University, Ohio State University, the University of Illinois, and Washington State

Britain and several other European countries forbid veterinary students to conduct lethal animal experiments, yet several American veterinary colleges allow "terminal surgeries."

thesis labs range in their invasiveness, from mind-altering drugs, intubations, venous catheters usually in all four limbs, to arterial catheters."

Because of the media controversy surrounding WSU, Spokane County Animal Control and Shelter stopped selling live animals to the university and Whitman County Humane Society and Tri-Cities Animal Control declined the WSU contract to send unwanted animals to the school. Although the Spokane County shelter will continue to provide animal cadavers to WSU for teaching purposes, the university still purchases live animals from other suppliers. Clarkston Animal Shelter in Washington is sending homeless animals to WSU to be used in terminal practice sessions. Unfortunately, in late August 2002, the Clarkston City Council members voted to continue selling dogs from Clarkston Animal Shelter to WSU.

At a local city council meeting, Clarkston Mayor Donna Engle proclaimed it "a no-win situation for the council" and bemoaned that "we're going to come off looking like the bad guy either way." According to the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, the council received an e-mail from Dr. Warwick Bayly, the dean of WSU, encouraging the city

University's (WSU's) College of Veterinary Medicine, subject animals to numerous painful, invasive procedures before they are killed.

Brad and Hannah Evergreen, two compassionate veterinary students at WSU are taking flack from fellow students, teachers, and members of the community for reporting the school's routine use of dogs and cats in multiple, cruel procedures. In a letter to PETA, Brad Evergreen wrote, "In my anesthesia lab, the dog that I was forced to use had already been through theriogenology research, a junior surgery lab where surgery was performed and recovered, another anesthesia lab, and now another lab. These an-

to continue the sale of live animals "that the city would otherwise have to kill."

A Better Way

Although all of the 27 U.S. veterinary medical schools use live animals for teaching purposes, several of them do not subject animals to terminal surgeries in required courses. The esteemed Tufts University has no terminal or invasive surgeries in either its required or elected courses. Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, California offers a program that does not kill any animals and will focus on "reverence for life." The program has been accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association's Council on Education.

According to Teri Bernato of the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights (AVAR), Cornell University, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Florida, and many other schools, have also stopped performing terminal surgeries in their required courses. AVAR has surveyed all the vet schools in the U.S. and maintains a database on alternatives to using animals for education.

The most effective, ethical way of training top veterinary students is for them to practice procedures, such as spay and neuter surgeries, under close supervision. The animals would then be sterilized and vaccinated and placed for adoption at the animal shelter. Students can also learn on cadavers of medically euthanized animals. Companies like *Rescue Critters* offer simulators like "Advanced Airway Jerry," which boasts two lungs and a pulse. Students can learn to suture "skin," draw "blood" and more, without the use of animals.

Unfortunately, medical and veterinary colleges around the globe continue to use dogs, cats, and other animals for basic research. Countless colleges, universities, government institutions and facilities also experiment on animals for a variety of ridiculous reasons. Until we all realize that animal laboratories do not yield useful information—only pain and suffering—animals will continue to be used as living test tubes and walking pincushions. ■

Heather Moore is a staff writer for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and a regular contributor to IMPACT press on issues of animal rights and welfare.

Make an IMPACT

Ethics in Medical Research Issues

Presented by the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, this web page includes links to a list of U.S. medical schools that do and do not have animal labs and things you can do to help end live animal labs
http://www.pcrm.org/issues/Ethics_in_Medical_Research/ethics_medical.html

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Adam Finley...

Breaks the Silence

Like most struggling writers, I've found myself facing a dearth of writing opportunities, save for the occasional freelance gig. Therefore, I've been forced to make funds via normal jobs, such as my current temporary placement at the Department of Transportation. Someone has to take those identification photos, and apparently I'm just the right man to do it and have been for three months.

On average I take about three hundred pictures a day, and every single person refers to their picture as a "mug shot" in preparation for their receipt of the Most Unoriginal Statement Ever Made Award. But this isn't about that.

Nor is it about the fact that the verification process, in which I ask unprepared citizens to say their address and date of birth out loud, will actually cause an inordinate amount of people to freeze in their tracks as if I just asked them to recite the Bible in its entirety, and in the original Hebrew.

This is about what happened on September 11, 2002. Everyone was thinking about this day as it loomed closer, and I was no different. However, I told more than one person that I was going to shut out all media on that day. I wasn't going to pick up any periodicals, watch any television, or even go online. I really didn't need a full day of specialty programs peppered with ads for those new Eggo Waffles with jelly inside them.

At approximately the time the first plane hit one year earlier, one of the Department of Motor Vehicles supervisors came out and announced to everyone in the building that we would all observe a moment of silence as a sign of respect and remembrance.

And that's all I'm going to say about the anniversary of September 11th.

I still have more to say about that moment of silence, though, and the whole idea behind using it as a method of respect. If I were walking down the street and a friend said, "Let's go to church and pray," I could easily turn him away based on the fact that I'm not religious. If I receive a call from someone asking to help

him knit a gigantic commemorative sweater, I could turn him down without any guilt whatsoever because that's a really stupid idea. However, when I'm in a public place and someone announces unexpectedly that everyone will observe a moment of silence, I'm forced to comply, whether it's my own personal choice of remembrance or not.

I've always protested things in my own quiet and unassuming way. When I grow tired of large marketable breasts on television I simply turn it off and crack open a book, rather than launch a letter writing campaign. I fight lookism by not purchasing fashion magazines, and I do likewise for any corporation who puts profits ahead of the well being of their underage foreign workforce. This seems to work just fine most of the time, but I can't protest a moment of silence with silence.

I think the appeal of the moment of silence is that it's not exactly a prayer, though one could certainly pray during it. It's a kind of all-encompassing method that doesn't really alienate anybody, except for those of us who are maniacally independent and wish to reflect in our own way without being forced into some collective ten second memorial service with a few hundred strangers who can't sign their own name, god knows why we let them drive cars.

So what am I, some kind of jerk? Do I not appreciate the magnitude of what transpired one year ago? Obviously, I do, but whatever happened to individual reflection? Was the supervisor, taking it upon herself to designating a moment of silence, any different than me standing up and announcing, "I would like everyone in the room to ponder the impact of what happened one year ago in their own heads. You can do this silently, or while conversing with other people."

I've been shanghaied into moments of silence before, and I can honestly say that I never actually think about the person, place, or event I'm supposed to be thinking

(FINLEY, continued on page 60)



art by Marty Kelley

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE PLAYGROUND...

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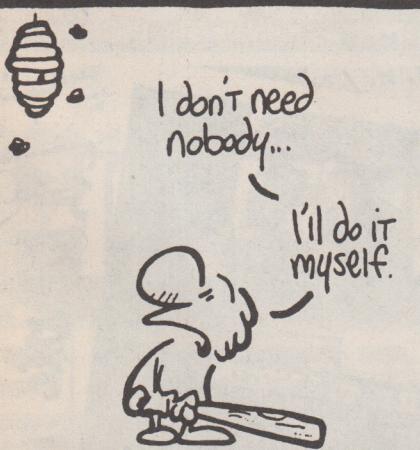
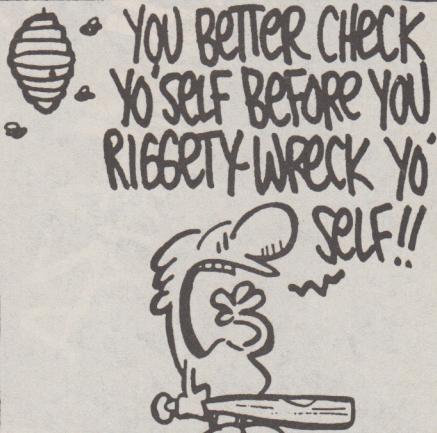
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KEITH KNIGHT

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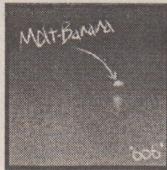
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We're Not Winning the War On Terrorism

One year later, things aren't much better.



by Jesse Walker



art by Eric Spitzer

Item: In June 2002, *The New York Times* published an extraordinary article on its front page—extraordinary, because it featured a series of anonymous government officials making the kind of statements previously found in pacifist journals and isolationist web sites. As a result of the Afghan campaign, they argued, Osama bin Laden's semi-centralized terror network was now more dispersed, more decentralized, and more deadly. It was active "from North Africa to Southeast Asia," and was probably responsible for recent terrorist attacks around the world, including a car bomb that exploded outside the U.S. embassy in Karachi, Pakistan.

"Al Qaeda at its core was really a small group, even though thousands of people went through their camps," one official told the *Times*. "What we're seeing now is a radical international jihad that will be a potent force for many years to come."

Item: In July 2002, after six months of close collaboration between American and Philippine troops, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo announced that Abu Sayyaf—a Moro Muslim rebel

group allegedly linked to bin Laden and undeniably responsible for a series of kidnappings and brutal killings—had been defeated. The U.S. echoed this assertion, declaring the operation a success and announcing that it would be pulling out most of its troops.

A month later, one unit of the allegedly defeated army kidnapped three Indonesian sailors. Another band seized six Filipino salespeople, beheading two of them and holding the others for ransom. In the town of Patikul, the heads of two Jehovah's Witnesses were left in a public market, next to a bloodstained note. "This is what will happen to those who do not believe in Allah," it read.

Item: Here in the U.S., FBI boss Robert Mueller has declared that suicide bombings on American soil are "inevitable." Vice President Dick Cheney has said that terrorists "will inevitably" acquire weapons of mass destruction, and "will not hesitate to use them." Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice have issued similarly fatalistic warnings.

The Fog of War

Wars aren't the sort of thing you can tally up on a scorecard, especially wars whose ultimate goals are more political than military, wars fought against a dispersed group rather than a state, and wars with no easily recognized markers of victory. It gets worse when you consider how tough it is to get reliable information about what's going on in the field—a hard enough problem for America's military and intelligence agencies, but worse still for ordinary civilians who must contend with the deliberate disinformation flooding in from both sides.

It doesn't help that the enemy is so poorly defined—not just by those who claim we are fighting terror itself or some comparably unfathomable abstraction, but even by those who attempt to speak clearly about just whom American soldiers are meeting on the battlefield. The prisoners detained indefinitely at Guantanamo, for example, are regularly described as "Al Qaeda and Taliban," as though the two groups were identical and their partisans interchangeable. To this day, hardly anyone—maybe no one—knows how many of the men locked up in the Pentagon's Cuban enclave were in on terrorist plots like 9/11, how many merely fought for the former Afghan government, and how many are tribal soldiers who happened to be allied with the Taliban on the wrong day. And these are captives taken in the theater of the War on Terror that looks the most like an actual war: the invasion and partial conquest of Afghanistan. Elsewhere, fierce arguments rage over whether Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are allies in the struggle or our craftiest enemies, if not both. Even the phrase "Al Qaeda" is misleading: It properly refers to Osama bin Laden's operation to finance Islamist groups, but now seems to encompass an entire network of terrorists who received his money.

These cells are not a hierarchy with Osama, or anyone, at their

head, and thinking of them that way dangerously misstates the problem.

Given all that, it may seem foolhardy to try to say just who might be winning this global melee. But I'll stick my head in the guillotine and hazard an answer:

1. The terrorists aren't necessarily winning, but
2. neither are we.

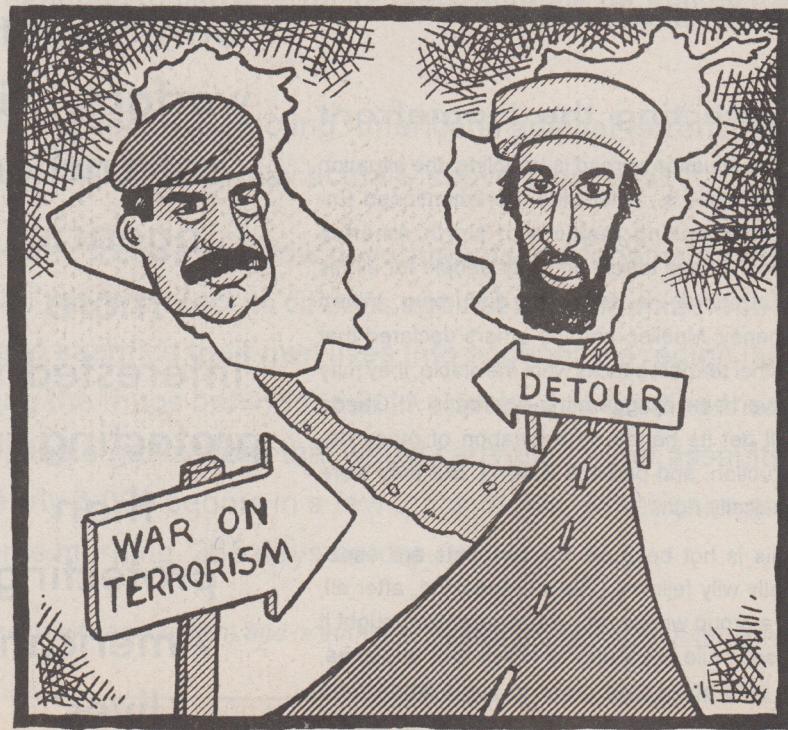
In fact, if we limit our analysis to the war goals that most Americans share—destroying the Islamist terror network and protecting the homefront against further attacks—we're in pretty bad shape.

Destroying Al Qaeda

The enemy in this war has been defined so broadly as to take in everyone from Colombia's coke-trafficking guerillas to the starving Stalinists of North Korea. But the chief goal is to break up the network that actually appears to have been responsible for the attacks of last fall. In September 2001, bin Laden's forces were based in Afghanistan. In September 2002, they are widely believed to have regrouped in Pakistan, though this—like all factual claims about the war's progress that cannot easily be checked by an English-speaker living in North America—has been hotly disputed, as has the question of whether bin Laden has survived with them.

Set that aside. The most important question is not whether Al Qaeda has more or fewer training camps, more or fewer fighters, more or fewer channels of communication—not unless "fewer" means "virtually no." From the terrorists' point of view, the question is whether they have captured the allegiance and imagination of the Muslim world. Almost certainly, 9/11's demonstration of Ameri-

America is the world's dominant military power. It can overthrow governments in Afghanistan and Iraq without much fear of defeat. What it can't do is protect its citizens against every maniac with a beef against us.



can vulnerability has vastly increased the confidence and popularity of fanatics around the globe, and the subsequent overthrow of a stone-age government did little to settle the score.

That doesn't mean the legendary Arab Street, or its counterparts in sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and the Far East, is more willing to rise up against insufficiently Islamic overlords and install a Taliban-style theocracy. On that level, bin Laden's crew has mostly failed. For all the sympathies they've mustered in parts of the Muslim world—in sections of Afghanistan, pilgrims visit the graves of Al Qaeda fighters for their reputed healing powers—the Revolution is clearly behind schedule.

The trouble is, there's a difference between being unable to convert a fifth of the world to your cause and being unable to muster further operations against the West. Al Qaeda is more a loose network than a single corporate entity; in the annals of officially designated enemies, it is more akin to the Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy than to the Communist Party. Furthermore, its operations do not necessarily require a lot of manpower.

We also know that its defeat in Afghanistan has not been matched by similar losses in the Philippines and elsewhere—and for that matter, that the fall of the Taliban has in no sense meant that Afghanistan itself is subdued. The new "coalition government" has little authority outside the cities, and within them it is contending again with fundamentalists hostile to Western liberties.

It is also true that governments in both the West and the Muslim world have arrested terrorist conspirators, and that there are surely covert operations afoot whose details we do not know. But to the extent that we can fathom what's actually going on outside our borders, we don't seem to have gotten very far.

Protecting the Homefront

If the situation abroad is troubling, the situation at home—i.e., where the aforementioned English-speaking resident of North America doesn't have to rely on other people for all his information—is downright disturbing. When Cheney, Mueller, and the others declared that further terrorist attacks were inevitable, they may have been exaggerating—perhaps Al Qaeda will get its hands on a weapon of mass destruction, and perhaps it won't. But they were basically right.

This is not because the terrorists are especially wily fellows. (We are speaking, after all, of a group whose recruits apparently thought it wise, while preparing to hijack four airplanes, to brag about their plans to some lapdancers in a Florida strip bar.) It is because, on almost

every level, the "security" measures passed in the last year have been, at best, time-wasting jokes—and at worst, dangerous diversions.

The proposed reorganization of American intelligence has floundered in bureaucratic warfare, with entrenched agencies more interested in protecting turf than protecting American lives. Part of me can't blame them for this—after all, they're merely emulating the behavior on display at the top. The Bush administration's ass-covering response to questions about its failure to foresee the attacks are matched only by the behavior of Democrats so bent on scoring political points that they won't extend their investigations to the Clinton years. A healthy institution learns from its errors; an unhealthy one hushes them up.

The worst offender is probably the FBI, a bureau so wary of embarrassment yet immune to shame that its best agents have found themselves going to the media rather than their superiors with news of how leads that might have stopped 9/11 were not pursued.

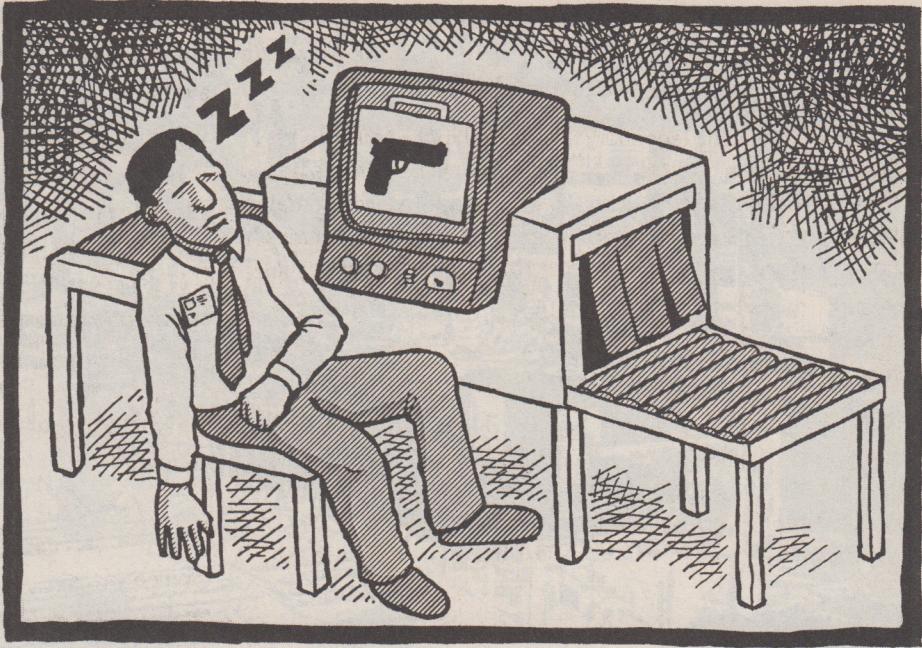
But a special honorable mention should be granted to the new Department of Homeland Security, which immediately attempted to exempt itself from whistleblower protections. It's hardly unusual for a bureaucracy to put its own health above its stated mission, but it's rare for one to indicate its priorities so early in its life.

Meanwhile, the new federalized airport security force turns out to be the exact same airport security force as before, with a different signature on its paychecks. Humiliating searches and nutty confiscation policies have disarmed law-abiding citizens without giving us any reason to believe committed terrorists could not smuggle real arms aboard a plane. (Undercover agents have managed to slip fake weapons past security in almost a quarter of their tests since 9/11.)

If security at airports is overly intrusive, security elsewhere is schizoid. Guards are everywhere, to the point where undercover cops are stationed at Rosh Hashanah services, yet any remotely creative person can conceive of ways to do serious damage, real or symbolic, in cities across the country. If one-man terrorist incidents like the July 4, 2002 shooting at Los Angeles International Airport have been rare, most of the credit should not go to the police, or even to the impressive acts of civilian self-defense that brought down Flight 93 and later stopped a would-be shoe-bomber. It should go to the fact that so few people in the United States are willing to engage in mass murder to begin with.

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Everything Else

It's impossible, of course, to reduce this conflict to breaking up Al Qaeda and defending the homefront. Almost everyone with an agenda has tried to tack it onto this war, some more successfully than others. If on September 10, 2001, you felt the U.S. should attack Iraq, then on September 12 you discovered that the War on Terror required a "regime change" in that country. If on September 10, 2001, you favored compulsory "national service," then on September 12 you discovered that the War on Terror demanded no less. If on September 10, 2001, you favored federal subsidies to the underpants industry, you probably managed to find a terror-related rationale for that by the end of November.

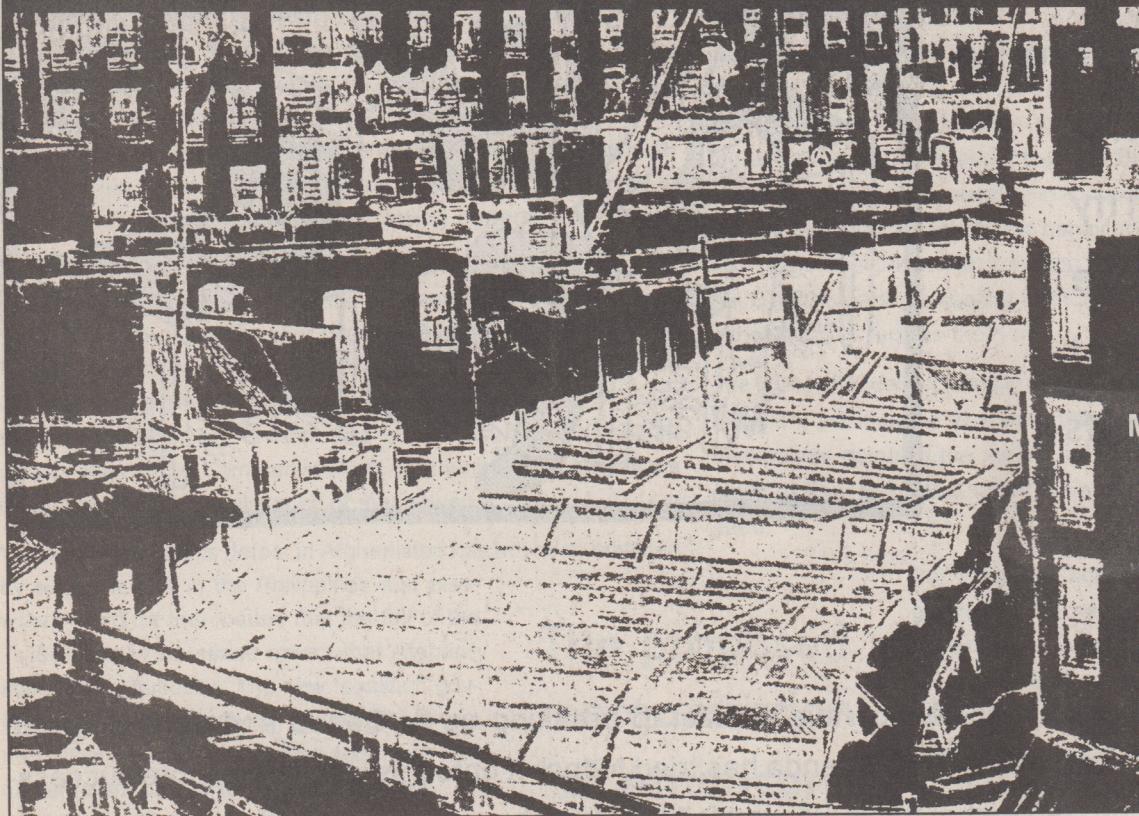
But such projects do not advance the core mission of protecting Americans against terrorist assaults. In some cases, like the pending war with Iraq, they may actually subvert that goal.

America is the world's dominant military power. It can overthrow governments in Afghanistan and Iraq without much fear of defeat. What it can't do is protect its citizens against every maniac with a beef against us, or browbeat Arabs willing to sacrifice their own lives into accepting a region laid out on America's terms. I'm all for capturing the thugs behind the 9/11 attacks and feeding them their own testicles, and I'm all for destroying the organizations that would carry out further assaults. But a year after those murderers killed nearly 3,000 people in a few quick blows, Americans are scarcely safer now than they were that same morning, 365 days before. KK

Jesse Walker is Associate Editor of Reason magazine (www.reason.com) and is author of Rebels on the Air: An Alternative History of Radio in America (NYU Press).

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★QUICKIES...a little bit on a lot of records★

TOP PICKS

Below represents the "best of" music that was reviewed for this issue as determined by IMPACT press music reviewers.



Amon Tobin • *Out From Out Where* • Ninja Tune Records

• A native of Brazil, Amon Tobin has rhythm in his blood. He also has a flair for making up sounds and combining layers upon layers of samples in his tracks. *Out From Out Where* is his fourth album, and it feels like a soundtrack to a film, dark and seductive. (AL)

Bouncing Souls / Anti-Flag • BYO Records Split Series Volume 4 • BYO Records • When I popped open my CD package and saw this release, I swear I jumped 10 times higher than Justin Sane of Anti-Flag ever will. I then began to ponder, "What is better than the BYO Split Volume 3?" and doubt came over me. Of course, everyone makes mistakes, but this time the truth didn't hurt! The Bouncing Souls kick off the CD with the melodic "Oi Punk" style everyone loves, also adding a touch of acoustic and pop-punk, and you can't forget the hard version of Anti-Flag songs they cover. Once the Bouncing Souls are done, Justin Sane's melodic voice signals another set of incredible songs featuring melodic, yet hardcore vocals, mind-boggling bass riffs and emotional lyrics all fans of Anti-Flag have come to love. This review is so cheesy because I am speechless and can't think of anything else except for one word to describe this release, and that is "Incredible!" (CMax)

Busdriver • *Temporary Forever* • *Temporary Whatever* • The first track sold me. This guy can flow. Not like an average MC, not like a good MC. This guy is gifted with abilities that few MCs display (those few include KRS-One, Eminem, Slick Rick, Aceyalone, among a few others). The Aceyalone reference is quite appropriate, too, as both of them were part of the Project Blowed crew that amazed those who have heard their recordings. But Busdriver is also well respected for his freestyle and live performance abilities. On wax, Busdriver will mesmerize you with his vocal skills, flipping his delivery style in multiple ways in a single track. He can speed it up, slow it down, sing a little, deliver spoken word – man, this guy is diverse. But for me, I need more than just a nimble lyricist. Luckily, this album is stacked with amazing beats, incredible instrument samples and an eclectic collection of musical genres, from jazz to drum and bass to head-bobbin' hip-hop beats. Oh, and did I mention the sick scratches delivered by D-Styles of the Invisibl Skratch Pkz? Get this CD, pop it in and let it blow your mind. (CM)

Karate • *Some Boots* • Southern • My friends have been begging me to listen to Karate for years, if only I had listened. This disc has me converted, that's for sure. With a smooth indie, almost jazzy feel at times, and Geoff Farina's almost conversational vocals, you are soothed into a musical dream. While it's mostly technical, which some might shy away from, there is brilliance in almost every sound. "Airport" is already a favorite of mine, along with "Remain Relaxed" and "Original Spies." (KM)

Madrid de los Asturias • *Amor* • Jrun Recordings • Upon first glance, you might think that Madrid de los Asturias are Spanish. In fact, they are from Vienna, which is becoming a hotbed for downtempo producers. They are however, influenced by Spanish music, as evidenced by their frequent use of Latin percussion, flamenco and other Andalusian flavors in their organic take

on downtempo grooves. (AL)

Namelessnumberheadman • *When We Leave, We Will Know Where We've Been* • Urinine • These guys are really great. What is lost on the listener of this album without a press release handy is the size of the band. Just 3 multi-instrumentalists flow between nine keyboards, two guitars, steel guitar, electronics, and drums to create a sound so full you just can't believe it's only them. Their composition is genius, and you know you're hearing something completely new. Less is certainly more for this intelligent group with cutting-edge ideas in the evolution of sound. (DP)

Phantomsplasher • *self-titled* • Ipecac Recordings • You know anything coming out of Ipecac is gonna sound weird. Phantomsplasher, James Plotkin's latest band, is no different. Think of Fantômas without the screaming. It seems the drummer gets paid by the beat, because he consistently beats the hell out of his kit, sometimes in random patterns. Guitars are a mess of jangly distortion, and synths provide sound effects. You definitely have to be in the mood to sit through 43 minutes of this aural assault. (AL)

The Paper Chase • *Hide The Kitchen Knives* • Beatville • A seriously eerie and dramatic rant of emotions starts out with the track "I Did A Terrible Thing" which is a dark confession that sounds a bit like the first Nine Inch Nails album. The music on this disc is tough and loud; it marches from track to track. High-pitched screaming vocals make things comfortable in a demented kind of way. The disc continues on pounding with aggressive bass, drums and squeaky guitar riffs. The heavy industrial sound is mixed with a spaced-out vibe that thrives for attention. Did you get all that? Wait, there's more. The sound crosses between the bass guitar of Les Claypool and Prong. Lyrics lean towards basic storytelling, religion, relationships and are all transformed accordingly. John Congleton is the mind behind this band out of Dallas and on this, their third album, it has been said that John may have finally taken control of his demons that were present on the bands past releases. Lets hope so, or not. (JC)

Various Artists • *20 Years of Dischord 3xCDs* • Dischord Records • Is there a punk indie label with a more prolific history than Dischord? I'd say, probably not. And this three-CD set gives you 73 reasons why. This is the kind of release that doesn't need a review, just the facts. There are three CDs, the first two chronicle Dischord's musical history from 1980 through 2000 – featuring a track from all 50 of the bands on the label. They include Minor Threat, Iron Cross, Rites of Spring, Dag Nasty, Embrace, Shudder to Think, Fugazi, Jawbox, Hoover, The Make-Up and Faraquet, 50 songs and 50 bands total. While that's impressive, disc three will make fans drool: 23 tracks of rare or unreleased material from such artists as Minor Threat, Government Issue, Slant 6 and The Teen Idles. Want more? There are also video files of live performances and a 100+ page booklet chock-full of info that will make you an even bigger Dischord dork. All this for \$25ppd! Need I say more? (CM)

Various Artists • *Embedded Studios Presents: The Bedford Files* • Embedded Music • Mix tape DJ's Hipsta

and Ese have finally pushed out their first full-length project and have a line-up that needs little introduction. Tracks from many of the underground mainstays are the showcase of this collection. With hyper beats and a sound that stays consistent straight through, this mix will stay glued to your CD player. Aesop Rock and Vast Aire (Cannibal Ox) show up on four tracks and they may not even be the highlights of the show! Other appearances are from the likes of Tes, Hanger 18, M. Sayyid, C. Rayz Walz, RJD2 and more. Enough said. (JC)

Various Artists • *The Spice* • Arrakis Records • I think most hip-hop heads respect the talent that Philly holds. But this much talent?! Damn! This is a slammin' compilation from track one to track 18. The beats on this album keep the pace, pounding out a rhythm that is irresistible and driving. It's the kind of hip-hop that really gets you amped up, not just head bobbin', but rockin'. Every time I listen to this, I close my eyes and pretend I'm in a big city club, the dance floor packed, the sound system bumpin' the album till my ears bleed. It's a beautiful dream. And while the music is definitely a major part of what makes this release great, it's even better with the vocal support provided by mostly Philly-based MCs, including Briz, Digs Darklighter and Kenneth Masters. The numerous vocalists provide diverse lyrical styles that keep each track fresh. Look out NYC, looks like Philly is ready to step up as the possible new leader in indie hip-hop. (CM)

Warsawpack • *Gross Domestic Product* • G-7 Welcoming Committee • Every now and then a band comes along that breaks barriers, crosses genres and blows the music formula out of the water. Warsawpack is a crew of seven Canadians set on bringing both a musical and political revolution to the forefront. Combining elements of jazz, rock, funk and hip-hop, Warsawpack deliver a socio/political message with each fresh track. There are thirteen tunes to enlighten the listener with such lines as, "It's a small group of men/ with 51% of your Fortune 500 dividends/and you're living for them." Besides corporate consolidation, Warsawpack comments on such topics as big oil, war and our reliance on pharmaceutical drugs. And while the lyrics are brilliant, this release is so musically accomplished that the proactive lyrical element is just icing on an already aurally tasty treat. Warsawpack utilizes live bass, guitar, tenor sax, flute, baritone sax, drums, turntables and vocals. It's a lethal combination that will enlighten, inspire and enthrall any and all listeners. Welcome to the next generation of indie music. (CM)

Waxwing • *Nobody Can Take What Everybody Owns* • Second Nature • If it were up to me to plot the musical future, Waxwing would look like it. Its amazing to think after all the music I have heard in my lifetime that a record could affect me, shake me, evoke so much emotion as this one did on its first play. Already a fan of Waxwing, I knew I would like it, but this one takes the notch up and then some. This is an instant classic that is miles ahead of anything else put out recently. Filled with a blistering mix of emotion, temperament, hope, and pain all on a musical backdrop as passionate as the lyrics. Damn it, I think this one might almost be perfect. (KM)

★QUICKIES...a little bit on a lot of records★

CD releases

7L & Esoteric • Dangerous Connection • Brick Records • Boston's Esoteric lays down the flows and 7L provides the bulk of the beats on their sophomore effort of long awaited joints. Appearances by Count Bass D, Jedi Mind Tricks, Apathy, Kut Masta Kurt and J-Live spice things up a bit. The posse-cut "Rules of Engagement" with J-Live and Count Bass D stands out with a nice sound and fine rhyme display, as well as "Terrorist's Cell" which is a track about a self-doubting plane hijacker on the verge of doomsday. The disc will grow on you through its beats as the majority of the lyrics and flows are just along for the ride. (JC)

Affront • You'd Make A Good Looking Corpse • Commodore Records • To be honest, I almost didn't listen to this record. The cover art is definitely something found in a Stephen King film and (in my opinion) represented something similar to death metal (something I am not a big fan of). I'm glad I did listen though because this hardcore punk band hailing from Washington has everything any punk rock fan would enjoy! Hard guitar riffs, melodic vocals, background harmonies, and inspiring words that tell tales of anti-racism, the people of America (to some extent), and genocide leave you wanting more than just seven songs! The Bad Brains cover at the end of the record shows the creativity of the band as well. Keep a look out for this band; I sense big plans in their future. (CMax)

Animal Farm • Hear and now • Sky Tunnel Music/Popstar Records • This is Animal Farm's debut EP. Chock-full of songs about girls and the problems that surround teenagers in love. If you're into recycled pop nonsense you will definitely be into this band. Sounding like most radio friendly emo/pop this is a must have for fans of bands sounding like Sum 41 and Avril Lavigne. All I can picture in my mind while listening to this c.d. is hoards of 12-year-old girls screaming encore. (RP)

Annabella • Annabella • A Las Olas Recordings • The music here is very mesmerizing and popish. The gentle, soothing sound on vocals is that of Terri Dittmar who had gotten help on the album from her husband Tim who is drummer for Bobudgreenne. The mixture of indie-pop, beats, new wave sound and various influences from the 70's and 80's is what is birthed on this release. A lot along the lines of the Indigo Girls and Mazzy Starr, the 80's pop singer sound also shows its head heavily. (JC)

Arcade Inferno • The 'Dante' EP • self-released • With bands like The Hives, The Vines, The Pattern, The Strokes and The White Stripes getting national attention for their brand of garage rock and roll, it's about time a band without "The" in front of their name got some attention. Maybe Florida's Arcade Inferno is the band. Loads of feedback, plenty of energy and that "mod" sound the kids all seem to love are featured on this five-track CD. This self-released EP is the bands way to reach out to potential labels, but it's also a great way to introduce themselves to potential fans. (CM)

Arkestra One • self-titled • Eighteenth Street Lounge Music • For his self-titled debut as Arkestra One, Matthew Timoney blended elements from jazz, Latin, lounge, soul and funk into a highly cool album of downtempo beats. Employing the sultry vocals of Brazilian songstress Nina Miranda adds an eccentric and international flavor. (AL)

Ass Coffee • If Your Face Were On Fire, I'd Put It Out With A Sickle • One Lump or Two Records • Ass Coffee's first album was lumped into the avant jazz category due to their experimental style, and they were not happy about that. So, they set out to do a rock record. They kept the experimentation, and could now be compared to something from Storm and Stress or other such bands. The songs change all the time, and rarely slow down. Excellent. (AL)

Black Widows • Stops A Bleeding Heart • Initial • How good is it to hear Rob Pennington's voice again? The former Endpoint front man is back and bringing it all to the table again with his new outfit. While the vocals will bring back some vi-

sions of Endpoint and By The Grace Of God, but the music this time is straightforward and by no means just another attempt to resurrect ideas and styles of the past, this incarnation is planted firmly in the present with an eye on the future. This could be huge. (KM)

Blood Red • Hostage • Initial Records • Taking their name from a love of old U2 records, this band does sound a bit like a post-hardcore band with The Edge and Bono making guest appearances. Lyrically different and musically distant cousin of their heroes, this record still has a bit of flare and will spark some interest. While they have the winding ethereal music down quite well, I still found myself wishing for more of the good hardcore breakdown to show off their other roots. (KM)

Bluebird • Black Presence • Dopamine Records • Bluebird's space-rock brings to mind bands like Sianspheric, Godspeed You Black Emperor! and Tortoise. The songs range from ambient waves of sound, to more rock-oriented tracks, while maintaining a feeling of experimentation. Vibraphones, congas, keyboards and some horns help create an atmospheric mood. (AL)

Boy's Night Out • Broken Bones and Bloody Kisses • OneDaySavior • This disc reminds me of everything I loved when I first heard Grade. All sorts of bands scream, but there is something different in the voice when you just know the guy is putting it all out there for you. The nearly but not quite so pop guitar adds beautiful contrast, and the rhythm section is tight almost but not nearly confining the emotion. This one has almost constant rotation around my house lately. (KM)

Brooks • You, Me & Us • Mantis Recordings • Andrew Brooks' love for all kinds of electronica is evident. In You, Me & Us, he explores electro, house, techno and disco, keeping the groove going no matter what the style. The album feels like a mix tape by different artists, due to the changing genres, which makes it a perfect album to listen to at a party. (AL)

Carrie Akre • Invitation • My Way • Akre is best known for her work with Seattle rock bands Hammerbox and Goodness. She's gone solo, and gives us this self-released album of driving, rock-and-jazz-loopy tunes with retro stylings. Her vocals are sly and sexy, reminiscent of Raquel Welch's entertainment offerings of a quarter century prior, but with a modern spin. It has a strength of will that you don't usually see in solo female artists. (DP)

Children Of Fall • Ignition For Poor Hearts • Stickfigure • More good hardcore from Europe. If you are looking to put faith back into creative inspiring hardcore, this might give you some hope. In the along the lines of Darkest Hour or From Autumn To Ashes, Children Of Fall not only provide some ignition of poor hearts, but some gas too. I love the acoustic contrasts that make the almost metal bust out parts that much more intense. (KM)

Choke The Rivers With Our Dead • Self-Titled EP • Slave Magazine Records • Motherfuck hell yeah, this band rocks. I keep hearing an oddly mixed combination of Frail and Ashes, along with some other 90's hardcore. Excessively creative and emotional with wailing enthralling emotions that I can only imagine are best felt in a smelly house show in the middle of August. Four songs aren't enough. (KM)

Chris Mills • The Silver Line • Powerless Pop Recorders • Wasn't there a basketball player named Chris Mills? Like the NBA namesake, Chris Mills the singer/ songwriter's strength is his power game. While the songs are quiet and unassuming, the power and passion in the song structure are great. With a gentle nearly 80's Echo and the Bunnymen and a Whiskeytown thing going on all at the same time. Mostly acoustic guitars, some horns and strings add a different touch. Undefinable is its beauty. (KM)

City of Caterpillar • self-titled • Level Plane Records • As hardcore as City of Caterpillar can get, they also know the power that silence has. Several songs have slow, gloomy sections that have as much effect as when they are ripping away at their guitars, kicking the shit out of their drums, and screaming at the

top of their lungs. (AL)

Common Rider • This Is Unity Music • Hopeless Records • Former Operation Ivy singer Jesse Michaels has found some new inspiration and has now released an album he has always been planning to create. Early on it is a groovy punked-out rock record. Things change as the disc progresses, the sound changes towards a Long Beach, California style reggae rock with touches of 311 and Sublime mixed with the Offspring. As the title implies, a mesh or "unity" of styles with attitude and confidence are delivered here. (JC)

Cordero • Lamb Lost in the City (Cordero perdido en la ciudad) • Daemon Records • There is a bilingual play on words in the title. You see, "cordero" means lamb in Spanish. Ani Cordero is the lamb lost in the city, where the city is Brooklyn, NY. She sings both in English and Spanish, adding Latin influences to their indie rock sound. Sometimes the songs are slow, sometimes they pick up the pace, reminding the listener of Aterciopelados or Ozomatli. (AL)

Craw • Bodies for Strontium 90 • Hydra Head Records • Although they have stopped touring, you can still crank up Craw's newest, *Bodies for Strontium 90*, in the comfort of your own home. Of course, you'll probably have the cops called on you for excessive noise. This music is heavy, full of time changes and vocals that scream in your ears. I was reminded of Tool if they decided to do hardcore. (AL)

Custer & Goode • The Maverick Strain and Other Stories • BC Records • For the past ten years, Beth Custer has worked with dance troupe The Joe Goode Performance Group. This CD is a collection of songs from four major productions they have collaborated on. It goes all over the place, from jazz to experimental, country to avant-garde. Many tracks are instrumental; others have beautiful vocals or spoken word. (AL)

Cutthroats9 • self-titled • Reptilian Records • Cutthroats9 is fronted by ex-Uncane member Chris Spencer. Prepare your ears for bleeding, because this will blast the hell out of your eardrums. Not because it's big, chunky hardcore or metal, but because the aggression on this record is more genuine than you normally hear. The vocals are screamed in a perfect manner while the distorted rock in the background fuzzes with feedback, pounding drums and warped basslines. This is the soundtrack to an amazing car crash or bloody killing spree. It will make you drive too fast, break things and, quite possibly, hurt yourself. You've been warned. (CM)

Dälek • From Filthy Tongue Of Gods And Griots • Ipecac Recordings • Prepare for chaos in the best possible way. This album deserves a few spins and will trap anyone interested in hearing a different style within hip hop. At times spooky and other times gritty, the sound is sonic and made up of turntables, intelligent lyrics, spoken word and massive noise. Industrial-like technotic beats mix with drums and hidden guitar parts behind out-of-the-box lyrics. Lines like "scraped knees don't prove what you believe, your blind faith passed to your seeds...while you blame me for blemishing our family tree, I'll uproot all of humanity" touch on questioning beliefs and our journey through this life. This whole disc is a journey in itself, an acquired taste full of originality and concern. (JC)

Demons • Stockholm Slump • Gearhead Records • Sweden's Demons show no signs of slowing down on their sophomore effort, *Stockholm Blues*. They blend rock and roll with garage rock and regular rock and roll, creating a highly combustible combination. Get ready to be blown away! (AL)

Destination: Daybreak / New Mexican Disaster Squad • Split E.P. • Breaker Breaker Records • Out of Orlando, FL, these two bands push out some serious energy. Destination blends elements of punk, raw Southern rock and a rowdy hardcore rock sound fronted by melodic female vocals on the first five tracks. The vocals and music have such a different sound that they blend so damn well together, and with confidence. Don't miss out on frontwoman Elysson Kennedy singing "coming up from the goddammed dirty south / putting up with their goddammed dirty mouths" on the track "Stealing Home." Makes you want to

★ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ★

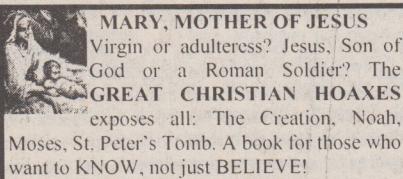
hear the full length already. New Mexican finishes out the E.P. with six tracks of aggressive punk rock that storms along like a runaway train with a solid sound and screaming vocals. Check out the track "L.O.S.T." (JC)

Disarray • *In The Face of the Enemy* • Eclipse Records • When you learn that this album was produced by GWAR frontman Oderus Urungus, you know it's gonna kick ass. With a sound similar to old Pantera mixed with stoner rock and a touch of hardcore, Disarray leaves a trail of pain behind them. Hard charging guitars create a thick wall of sound, an amazing feat considering they are a three-piece. (AL)

DJ Jazzy Jeff • *The Magnificent* • BBE • The debut album from turntablist and producer DJ Jazzy Jeff is a reflection of the rich musical heritage within his hometown of Philadelphia. After starting his own production company (A Touch of Jazz) Jazzy has since been laying down beats behind the scenes, and this release keeps his sounds hovering just above the underground once again. Packed with hip-hop and R&B flavor that strays from the pop, this collective effort, another Beat Generation product, is not bad from front to back. The downfall is that not much turntable scratching is heard (mostly on the hooks) on these mellowed-out beats and because of that not much is surprising here. J-Live is slammin' on "Break It Down" and "A Charmed Life" and Jazzy shines with beats that showcase Chef, Freddie Foxx and Pauly Shamy. (JC)

dZihan & Kamien • *Gran Riserva* • Six Degrees Records • There must be something in the water in Vienna, because they have been exporting excellent downtempo beats for a while now, with Kruder & Dorfmeister, Koop and dZihan & Kamien. Besides the jazzy, sensual compositions that they are known for, they also create house influenced dance numbers. (AL)

Egon • *Phonetic Disasters* • *Has Anyone Ever Told You?* • A lineup change has changed things slightly for this Texas band. On their third full-length things are a bit mellower with low-toned, at times melodic, vocals that have these guys coming across a bit deeper than in years past. Lyrics are poetic and the jangly guitars alongside tight drum work and the new focus on keyboards make this album good all the way through. The two instrumental jam sessions add structure to the disc as a whole and keep this band moving along no matter what changes. (JC)



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Eighteen Visions • *Vanity* • Trustkill Records • What sets Eighteen Visions apart from other metalcore bands is their eagerness to experiment. Where else would you find choruses with multiple harmonies, or an acoustic guitar track? Of course, they pound on your ears like no one else, with gut wrenching vocals and thicker than hell guitar riffs. (AL)

Elaine Lachica • '9' • self-released • Elaine has the ability to use her voice to both uplift and haunt a listener. Backed by ethereal, soothing sounds, '9' creates a musical landscape that flows like an emotional ocean. Elaine has extensive schooling in both music and drama (Peabody Conservatory of Music and American Academy of Dramatic Arts), and that knowledge shows through with this release. (CM)

End On End • *Why Evolve When We Can Go Sideways* • Sub-standard • So is it me or does Substandard have a monopoly on all the good hardcore bands in the west? End on End argues my point with a great collection of politically potent songs that will shake the complacency on the most jaded of hearts. Fiery guitars and absolutely brutal drums lay down the tracks for a throat of razorblades. Deep and heavy is such a beautiful combination. (KM)

Erik Sootes • *Nerves* • self-released • Erik Sootes has been playing guitar for over 15 years, and his experience shows in Nerves. Armed with only an acoustic guitar, he works his way through flamenco, rock, classical and other styles effortlessly. This album is perfect for listening during rainy afternoons. (AL)

Everest • *The Road Less Traveled* • Join The Team Player • This should be the soundtrack for a movie about girls and boys who wear thick rimmed glasses and sweaters. This band should be on the "likes" list of every profile on Make-Out Club. Every jaded Get-up Kids fan has a new icon in the making. Art kids and disenfranchised preppy kids unite, I found a new icon for your lonely nights. (KM)

Everybody Uh Oh • *Man Am I Brad* • Arborvitae Records • This album opens with a slow-moving, heartfelt indie rock "ballad." The next track is more upbeat and poppy, reminding me of Mates of State meets The Cure. It's a pretty addictive song. From there, the album bounces around, from feedback-heavy, indie rock tunes to more flowing, soothing pop gems (the latter being a little more prevalent on this release). Without fail, the band seems to find a way to incorporate some quirky, and effectively used, electronic elements. Champaign-Urbana, Illinois has been known for great indie bands (Braid, The Poster Children) and now another name can be added to the list. (CM)

Exhaust • *Enregistreur* • Constellation Records • In the tradition of most bands on Constellation, Exhaust's music is a mixture of ambient and experimental rock blended together in a way Brian Eno would love. Ten minutes can go by without hearing anything from the drummer, then he picks up the pace with a catchy beat, only to drop it again for a while. After it was all over, I was ready for a nap. (AL)

F • self-titled • Morticia Records • Led by singer/guitarist F, the band that bears his name are unabashed New Order and The Cure fans. They combine The Cure's sad and gloomy lyrical content with New Order's danceable beats. They even covered Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart." Of all the current bands paying homage to 80's pop, F is the most true to the genre. (AL)

Floor • self-titled • No Idea Records • These guys have been together for ten years, and only now did they finally release their debut record. The vocals are soaring and melodic, and the guitars are tuned down as far as possible, sounding somewhat like Korn. The difference is that while Korn has five guys in their band, Floor accomplishes their wall of sound with only three members! (AL)

Fragile X • *Plan B* • Bone Break Records • This is rock and roll, plain and simple. Distorted guitars and simple song structures. It's not a bad thing, though. That's what rock and roll is, right? These guys have a first time in the studio sound, but I could be wrong. It's a good disc and I'll bet that they put on

a heck of a live show. They have a sound vaguely reminiscent of Sacred Reich. (MK)

Free Beer • *The Only Beer That Matters* • Alternative Tentacles Records • There once was a time when Skateboarding wasn't on ESPN every two hours and it was actually frowned upon. Free Beer was formed around that time, with skaters who also played punk music, helping create skate punk. Their songs have been collected and are all here, and sound remarkably well. This is Volume 1 of a three part series of skate punk re-releases. (AL)

Fuzz Townshend • self-titled • Stinky Records • A former member of Pop Will Eat Itself and Bentley Rhythm Ace, Fuzz Townshend creates highly danceable music with an indie rock flair and elements of folk music. Equal parts Fatboy Slim and Blur, his eclectic sound is sure to get you dancing in no time. (AL)

GBH • *Ha Ha Go Kart* • GBH??? They're still around? Apparently, twenty-two years has not mellowed these guys one bit, as they continue recording noisy and distorted hardcore punk rock. They sing about non-conformity, drinking beer, punk rock, and religion, and they're going to tell you exactly what they think. My guess is they'll be around for another twenty years. (AL)

Girl On Top • *Sue Is Sane* • self-released • This actually came out on STR Entertainment a few years ago, but lead singer Karen DeBiase is still working this record and for good reason. It's a strong, ten-track power pop album with great vocals and a diverse rock sound that won't bore you. This is a head-bobbin' album, fit for college radio across the U.S. (CM)

Glasseater • Self-Titled • Fearless Records • What happened? I swore I loved Glasseater, I was giddy with anticipation when I got this disc to review, and wow was I let down. The older stuff had so much nerve and passion, with the imperfect crackle of the voice and the chaotic guitars. All of that in mind, this is tight, melodic, and well written. This power punk emo incarnation really lacks the beauty of earlier releases, and only comes out in quick busts on this release. (KM)

Graig Markel • *The Gospel Project* • Pattern 25 Records • The next time you are going to meet your significant other for a late night date, do yourself a favor and bring this CD along. You will score. Markel blends smooth R&B and soul with a touch of indie rock that grooves without sounding like an R. Kelly rip-off. The songs are centered around his silky voice, which is sometimes enhanced with horns, strings and keyboards. (AL)

Grain USA • *Over the Counter Culture* • Disposable Pop Revolution Records • Hooray! Another offering from one of my favorite new bands (new to me at least). Four tracks of pop-punk euphoria. These guys are good musicians and good songwriters, but they don't take themselves too seriously. Imagine a cross between Green Day and Barenaked Ladies. Odd, but true. And good, so good. (MK)

Gregor Samsa • *untitled* • Iodine Recordings • If you were to sum up Gregor Samsa's sound in one word, it would be haunting. Tons of sounds fill the air, from echoed male/female vocals, distant percussion, and reverbed guitars to unidentifiable loops and melancholic piano melodies. Unfortunately, there are only three songs on this EP. I would have liked to hear more. (AL)

Hangedup • *Kicker in Tow* • Constellation Records • If you liked Hangedup's debut, you are going to love *Kicker in Tow*. This duo experiments with drums and viola in an unprecedented manner. This album will hold your attention the entire time, building suspense and tension, then bringing you back down. Their attitude is all punk rock. (AL)

HiFiDriveBy • *Life's Not This Book You've Been Sold* • The New Beat Records • Four guys, a wealth of energy and a load of melody leads to an amazingly catchy release. For lack of a better genre, these lads play indie pop rock that is heavy on the rock. Track after track, it's an infectious ten-tune tour of musical goodness that is bound to leave even finicky listeners satisfied. It's hard to resist a good hook that isn't hollow. These guys are genuine, bringing real emotion to the music, not just relying on

★QUICKIES...a little hit on a lot of records★

a catchy melody to get 'em through. (CM)

I Farm • *Two Collected Works* • Traffic Violation Records • These guys combine their 2nd LP with a split 7" they did to display music that rides the fence between hardcore and punk. Lots of the songs almost seem like two songs put together. It makes it very interesting to listen to. This is good music that defies many of the typical structures of the genres. Lots of screaming and super fast beats to keep your tingly bits tingling. (MK)

Id. • *Idiom* • self-released • Bass heavy music that defies description. This is strange music, but it is really cool. The oddness is just enough to make it interesting to listen to, but not enough to make it obnoxious. It almost sounds like an '80s synth-pop band playing with a punk band, with neither taking control. Excellent cover of "Tainted Love." (MK)

i-defy • *The Lessons of Life's Brutality Become Guides to Action* • Medea Records • The basis for i-defy's music is their anger with today's social landscape. Racism, violence and other injustices fuel their old-school hardcore, with staccato vocals and ripping guitars. Every once in a while, they inject some melodies into a song, then continue to shred. (AL)

INDK! • *Kill Whitey* • Go Kart Records • INDK formed from the remains of Choking Victim, and are aided by members from Leftover Crack. They play fast, sometimes-melodic punk music that deals with plenty of political issues. Obviously, hardcore, ska and Oi are big influences in their sound. (AL)

Jack Hayter • *Practical Wireless* • Absolutely Kosher • Jack Hayter, of the band Hefner, has a voice like silk, old torn silk that's stinking and slightly rotten. Maybe that's not a compliment to you, but it should be. It's cultivated and perfect in all its slightly off key glory. Kinda a mix of Bob Dylan and Nick Cave, with great song craft. Listening to the songs you almost want to make a movie and make this the soundtrack. (KM)

Jets To Brazil • *Perfecting Loneliness* • Jade Tree • The Jets are back with their third record, a twelve-track collection of restrained energy and revealed emotions. This album is a little less country/Americana than the last album, adding a bit of a more rockin' punch. It's still not as powerful as I continue to desire, but I suppose I have to accept the direction of the brilliant men in Jets. Blake's vocals are, as always, fantastic, blasting out heartfelt lyric after lyric. The music is a mix of strong rock anthems and more mellow ballads that have that Americana jangle. Current fans of JTB will melt over this release while new fans will be absorbed by the skill at which Blake can effortlessly carry a song over a variety of musical styles. (CM)

June Panic • *Baby's Breadth* • Secretly Canadian • This is June's 11th release and it's definitely a solid work for the artist. Combining aspects of folk, pop, country and soul, he's created a heartfelt style that is both aurally pleasing and decidedly unique. It's hard not to find yourself easing into each track, leaning back, closing your eyes and being carried along with the melodies and enlightened by June's vocals. (CM)

Kellee Bradley • *I Talk to the Stars* • *In a Big Way* • Bradley, who has performed during the 2002 Olympic Torch Ceremony and sings the national anthem for the Seattle Mariners, gives us a great collection of 10 songs which straddle the genres of Americana, Pop, and Adult Contemporary. She has great talent both in vocals and songwriting, making her brand of straightforward musical simplicity a genuine pleasure to hear. (DP)

Kerbloki • self-titled • Bifocal Media • Kerbloki is back with their second release of electro/hip hop. Hailing from New York, Chapel Hill and San Francisco, this trio explores a wide variety of styles including hip-hop, rock, electronica and funk. Many songs influenced by acts like Beastie Boys, Kottonmouth Kings and The White Dove Frisbee Team. At times a bit repetitive, but after a few spins these guys really grew on me. If you're looking for a good soundtrack to your next house party this is definitely a strong contender. (RP)

Kitchens and Bathrooms • *Utter a Sound* • Sonic Union Recording Company • Though rooted in indie rock and math rock, Kitchens and Bathrooms have no trouble experimenting

with heavier sounds. The vocals even sound a bit emo from time to time. Tempos go from slow to fast and back to slow with little warning. (AL)

KriyaShakti • *Enter the Dimensional Vortex* • Celestial Light Recordings • KriyaShakti is two guys who want to enlighten your spirit through their music. While their colorful cover art and picture of them in the desert wearing beads might suggest they play music deemed fit for a Phish tailgate party, their songs actually incorporate mostly synthesized sounds and guitars. They inject hip-hop, free-jazz and new age into their songs, with often repeating chants taking you on a musical journey. (AL)

Kurt • *La Guard* • Nova Recordings • This is the 3rd release from these German masters of emo noise rock. The first thing that came to mind while listening to this CD was the resemblance to Twelve Hour Turn, although a bit more chaotic. The production on this album is great and every instrument is played to its fullest potential. With only 8 songs on this CD, Kurt left me wanting more. A must for fans of ShotMaker or Rye Coalition. (RP)

Latterman • *Turn Up The Punk, We'll Be Singing* • Traffic Violation Records • Latterman comes tearing out of the gates with a rippin' opening track that combines creative guitar work with an emotionally-driving sound. From there, the record is a blend of emocore and power punk that features extremely well-orchestrated music, a ton of melodies and enough hooks to keep this album original throughout. If you're into bands such as Digger, The Get Up Kids or Lifetime, you will find this irresistible. (CM)

Lo-Hi • *Say It More* • Tiger Style Records • Former Boss Hog drummer Hollis Queens and former Speedball Baby drummer Martin Owens formed Lo-Hi in 1997, and in 2000 added a second guitarist and a bass player to beef up their sound. Queens evokes Debbie Harry, Peaches and Alanis Morissette with her upfront vocal style, while the rest of the band plays garage-meets-punk riffs and beats. (AL)

Loose Change • *God Save The Scene* • Out Of Step • "Check this out, you might like it," Craig told me. "Nah," I said looking at the title, "I don't think it's my thing." So I'm wrong sometimes, it's not the first time you know. Great punk rock with heart and soul, sorta like Face to Face with a touch of Hot Water Music and old school So Cal punk. They can't save the scene, but hell if these guys can put out a damn good record. (KM)

Los Olvidados • *Listen to This* • Alternative Records • Volume 2 in the Alternative Records' skate punk re-releases, from way back in 1981. Los Olvidados played fast and furious punk, sloppy and loud. But I'll be damned if it doesn't bring back memories. You could compare them to the Sex Pistols, but without the seriousness. (AL)

Lucid Nation • *Tacoma Ballet* • Brain Floss Records • This double CD release by Lucid Nation is an interesting combination of styles. While singer Tamra Spivey yells her lyrics like she's had too much to drink, the music tends to be more subdued, floating through psychedelia and indie rock. (AL)

Madcap • *East To West* • Side One Dummy Records • This sophomore release from this group of "up-and-coming" Oi punk rockers only makes their future in life so much easier to achieve. Track one brings to you the melodic, Oi style we miss in a lot of the bands that you hear corrupting your radio station and all over Mp3.com. The lyrics have matured and you can tell that Madcap was trying a "new approach" with this record. Even though, (in my opinion) *Stand Your Ground* was better, the "scattered" guitar solos, mean vocals, blending harmonies, and "Oi Punk Grab A Beer & Sing-A-Long Anthems" will leave this CD worn out and over-played in your home stereo. (CMax)

Man Without A Plan • *Get Right* • Immigrant Sun • MW/OP sort of remind me of a screamo version of early Jawbreaker or maybe even Lifetime. Straight up punk rock with all the chaos and cymbal crashing glory one might expect. I love the vocals that sound like he has a swarm of wasps in his throat at times. The cover art is also glorious. (KM)

Manalive • *Heart, Hands and Mind* • Universal Warning Records

• Denver should consider themselves lucky to have a raging-good punk rock band like Manalive in their town. The rapid-fire, vocal-aggression coupled with pounding punk rock, fused with hardcore, and even ska rhythms, makes for a unique album. The twelve-tracks bring the early-90s East-Bay sound to mind – kinda like Crimpshrine meets Op Ivy, but done hardcore. There's so much here to like: the gruff vocals, the catchy riffs, the angst-filled intensity. (CM)

Matt Skiba/ Kevin Seconds • *Split CD* • Asian Man Records • If there was an all-star punk solo acoustic projects genre this one will rule it hands down. Matt Skiba of the current Alkaline Trio, and Kevin Seconds from the great 7 Seconds combine to create a great acoustic split. Skiba's sound more current, more polished, and lyrically brilliant contrasts very well with Seconds gruff, down to earth style. Bridging the punk rock generation gap and a good introduction to ones fans to the other, and a must for a fan of either. (KM)

McLusky • *McLusky Do Dallas* • Too Pure Recordings • While the spoon fed radio audience listens to corporation approved rock acts like The Strokes, The White Stripes and The Hives, you can rest assured that here at Impact we give you other options. McLusky is one such band, with kick ass guitar riffs and sarcastic lyrics that would never make it on radio. These two-minute gems evoke such artists as Pavement, The Jesus Lizard, the Pixies, and the aforementioned White Stripes. (AL)

Meat Beat Manifesto • *R.U.O.K?* • Armen Recordings • *R.U.O.K?* marks Jack Dangers' seventh album as Meat Beat Manifesto, and his first in four years. In it, he changes the sound you may have become used to, stripping away the politically charged vocals and the layers of samples and breakbeats. Not that this album is minimalist, but there seems to be a lot of repetition. He created almost all the sounds on the album from scratch, and enlisted turntablist Z-Trip and The Orb's Alex Paterson to help out on a couple of tracks. (AL)

Milemarker • *Satanic Versus* • Jade Tree Records • For their follow up to their well-received debut, *Anaesthetic*, Milemarker decided to mix things up a bit. This EP contains three songs of dark indie rock, and three electronically enhanced tracks the band recorded themselves. The enhanced portion of the CD contains raw tracks so you can do your own remixes, and a couple of videos. (AL)

Missy Roback • *Just Like Breathing* • Hear Kitty • Hauntingly beautiful vocals are the centerpiece of this great collection of songs produced by Steven Roback of the band Rain Parade, part of LA's Paisley Underground revival. Missy sings them with Aimee Mann-like lush harmonies over self-described "psychedelic all-country" arrangements. It is a soft, yet unsettling style of emotional power that strikes the listener with great fullness. (DP)

New Bomb Turks • *The Night Before The Day The Earth Stood Still* • Gearhead Records • After 12 years, the New Bomb Turks are still rocking hard. This latest release sees them returning to their early punk style, blending it with their more recent sound. Don't worry about the neighbors and play this sucker loud! (AL)

Null_Object • self-titled • self-released • Gary Herbert is Null_Object, and his interest in both indie rock and electronica is evident in this self-titled disc. Live instruments, particularly electric guitar, float around canned beats and other effects. The music could be loosely compared to DJ Shadow, Chemical Brothers, and Lvx Nova, all in one. (AL)

Nymb • *The Breathing Out Vapors Single* • ForgeAgain • Nymb broke up about a year ago, but their recordings live on. Distorted, syncopated guitar/bass tradeoffs support some really fantastic female vocals in this band's wild assault on rock normalcy. This album seems to articulate through music a sense of emotional instability as it thrusts backward and forward from some of the gentlest sweetness imaginable to a hardly thrown punch in the chest. Surprises around every corner. (DP)

Oneida • *Each One Teach One* • Jagjaguwar Records • This is

★QUICKIES...a little bit on a lot of records★

a double CD version of their previously vinyl only record of the same name. The first CD consists of two 15-minute songs. Each song basically consists of one riff played over and over and over. They are perfect for listening with headphones in the dark, letting your mind explore the repetition. The second disc is more varied, with seven tracks. Some tend to fall into the repetitive pattern, but for the most part keep it varied. One of the most versatile rock bands out there, Oneida always keeps you wanting for more. (AL)

Over It • Timing Is Everything • Lobster Records • The last time I heard these boys was when they first signed to Negative Progression Records and, honestly, I wasn't impressed. But now, with a new batch of songs and a brand new label, I have "thrown away" the old and am "Over It" (pretty cheesy, huh?). From the beginning of the album to the end, the talents of all four members of this band will creep over you as each solo and breakdown leaves you rewinding the song, making sure nothing was missed. The song-writing has also matured since their last record, especially track 12, where the members put their creative minds together to produce the biggest array of saying's and sounds ever heard. With vocals similar to the likes of Rufio and Finch, fast riffs between all the guitarists, melodic harmonies, and breakdowns have gotten this album to where it is today, and will bring them farther and farther as the years go by. If I only knew what these guys sounded like live. (CMax)

Paul Melancon • Camera Obscura • Daemon Records • Nice mellow music. This is slow, but not depressing. A well-balanced mix of songs with strong vocal delivery and intricate song structures. Definitely on the singer/songwriter side of the spectrum. Good stuff. (MK)

Plane • Idiot 4 minus 1 • self-released • Another fun and mellow disc. Not necessarily slow, but a soft disc. It almost sounds like a '60s retro thing, but not in a sappy nostalgic way. There is sort of a hint of Beck and Lou Reed and The Monkees. Interesting and fun, I like this disc. (MK)

Plankton Man vs. Terrestre • self-titled • Jrun Recordings • Taking elements from Mexican Norteña music and blending them with techno beats, the Nortec Collective caused quite a ruckus with its debut album. Two of its ex-members, Plankton Man and Terrestre, have joined forces to bring you this self-titled album. It showcases this new style of electronica called nortec. (AL)

Qualm • Long Story Short • Not Bad Records • I'm trying not to write "this sounds like Hot Water Music," but well, it does. The early Hot Water Music that has an edge combined with some medley and some great choruses, vocally and musically passionate. They cover my favorite Lifetime song, "Young, Loud, and Scotty" which is kinda weird, I'm not sure if that's treading on sacred ground or not, but they don't mess it up so I'll forgive them. (KM)

Seek • Surrender • Soulestrial Elements • This Atlanta group play what they call "progressive soul," since they take classic elements from soul music and cut them up with 21st century style. The songs are mellow and smooth, and make you want to dance away. Perfect for that romantic night with your honey. (AL)

Skillz • I Ain't Mad No More • Rawkus • No longer mad, Mad Skillz has shortened his title and in return may have let the world know how short the originality within Rawkus would run. This Virginia emcee has recruited the likes of Missy Elliot, Musiq, Cee-Lo and production by DJ Hi-Tek and the Neptunes to rehash such beats as "Rapper's Delight" and "Ugly" while borrowing lines from KRS-One among others. A couple tracks stand out like "Imagine" which is a make-believe story about rappers telling tall tales on wax. "Ghostwriter" has Skillz calling out (not by name) emcees in which he has written rhymes for in return for a couple bucks. Overall, it's all been heard before. (JC)

Smoke • Smoke Follows Fire • Kozmk Records • Formerly of Thunderfuck 69, Marc Star formed Smoke with bassist Yosh with the intent of creating some of the best fuzz / stoner rock out there. I think they succeeded, with a style similar to Scene Killer meets Queens of the Stone Age. (AL)

Speechwerks • The Journey • Illfold Inc. • Mars and Ries form this Chicago based hip-hop group and provide a lot of substance lyrically and musically on their debut offering. Incorporating live instruments, a b-boy vibe and 1970's influenced jazz funk and soul; this release flows easily and should make its mark within the underground world. Thick plots, conscious stories about life and just getting by day-to-day fill these 18 tracks. The lyrical delivery itself is nothing too original or anything that stands out but the overall blend of beats, stories and appearances by Casual, Rude One, Nu-Ras and Juice make this worthy of checkin' out. It's just another example of what the Midwest has to offer. (JC)

Spock's Beard • Snow • Metal Blade Records • I would never have expected progressive rock to show up on Metal Blade's catalog. I guess they just like to put out good music, regardless of the genre. If you like Yes, Genesis, King Crimson and Rush, you will probably like Spock's Beard. Neal Morse's singing is very similar to Phil Collins at times, and he is generally backed up by Yes-like harmonies and keyboards. *Snow* is a concept album that spans two discs and is the culmination of the band's 10-year career. (AL)

Staring Back • On • Lobster Records • To be honest, it is quite unfair for the bands and for the fans for me to review pop-punk and emo material because it is something I am not interested in. Throw away that fact and this is an incredible album. I know talent when I see it and this band has more talent than many bands that infest your local radio station and MTV. The diversity in the instruments and the creativity in each song is incredible, something I have never heard before. The lyrics match each song perfectly and the emotions of the band members are spilled out and expressed in every riff and beat that is played. Their live show is said to be just as good as the album. If so, then this band has everything going for them. Fans of Rufio, Midtown, and Unsung Zeros, be sure to pick this one up. (CMax)

Steve Gibb • Zig Zag • Stem Productions • Even though Steve Gibb plays almost every instrument on this album, he excels at playing the guitar. Tackling styles that range from jazz, to country, to Celtic rock, his fingers do all the talking in this instrumental set of songs. (AL)

Stillwell • Don't Face A Problem...Burn It • Forge Again Records/Hewhocorrupts, Inc. • The music on this hardcore release out of Chicago has no structure and the sound drowns out the already distorted vocals that don't offer much lyrically. "The Monet Shot" stands out from the other tracks with a more fluent sound that still keeps the edge intact for this grungy/punk band. The cover art is cool though. (JC)

Sugarman 3 & Co. • Pure Cane Sugar • Daptone Records • Everything about this album says "1970's funk." The album is packaged to look like an old record, using old fonts and everything. Even the music sounds like it was recorded 30 years ago. They capture the feeling from those days in these 11 tracks or organ driven funk. (AL)

T. Raumschmiere • Anti • Hefty Records • German producer Marco Haas is making his US debut with *Anti*. It's full of minimalist techno, with unusual sounds acting as the "instruments." Samples loop incessantly, and clicks and pops make you think your stereo is broken. In fact, the opening track, "Random Noize Musik," has a recurring noise that sounds like a record when it reaches the end of the last song. You'll suddenly forget you are listening to a CD. (AL)

Tender Trap • Film Molecules • K • This band plays hooky rock that's infused with some synthesized elements and female vocals to create an unusual, disembodied brand of pop. Their songs are quite clear and simple, but a hint of new wave and electronic looping here and there make all the difference. A fun album with that isn't afraid to experiment with sound molecules. (DP)

The All-American Rejects • Self-Titled • Doghouse • If the ghost of James Dean wasn't around the recording of this record then I have no explanation for the sexy misunderstood rebel sound The All-American Rejects have created. Weezer, The Anniversary

sary, and Reggie and The Full Effect doing covers of 80's songs might be another way to think of it. However it came to pass, this record is a decent effort, and infectiously poppy. You may love it, but you may not admit it to your friends. (KM)

The Beautiful Mistake • Light a Match, For I Deserve To Burn • The Militia Group • From track one, this four-piece from Riverside, California, tear things up. The guitars wail as the vocals comb a heartfelt landscape, only shattered by the occasional screaming. Each track forward only reinforces the shear energy this band packs. They remind me of Thursday (and even Grade at times), but craft guitar licks that blow both bands out of the water. Emo rock has become a trite and hollow descriptor for music, but The Beautiful Mistake embody everything that style probably should contain: a big rock sound and a load of emotion blasted out musically and vocally. (CM)

The Color Guard • Speech For Heated Hearts • Suziblade Music • For male-bashers worldwide is this metal-laced pop album that stays heavy on the chords and attacks moments of fear, lust, anxiety and fury. Tracks like "Not My Valentine" and "Superglue" are dark with harmonies and aggressive with feeling. The music is a lot along the lines of 80's new wave but with a bit more power. (JC)

The Commercials • Twenty Years Tonight • Jump Start • This CD is half average, a sort of not half bad, but not really half good either. It has that over played sound that everybody seems to make these days where they scream like a hardcore band, play fast like a punk band, have mellow melodic breakdowns like an emo band, while trying to be catchy like commercial radio punk (forgive the pun). The last song is a 3 and a half-minute song that becomes a monotonous uncreative 17-minute waste of time. (KM)

The Control • The Forgotten EP • Go Kart • The name "The Control" is sort of ironic I guess, since these guys play straight up brutally fast hardcore. A great mix of traditional roots hardcore and new school styles, slightly melodic, but mostly four to the floor and straight for the throat hardcore that will peel the paint off your walls. (KM)

The Ditty Mu • First Suckling 2xCD • self-released • There's a red CD and a blue CD – each with a different lineup of members. Erica and Mitch, though, are the co-conspirators behind this massive recording endeavor. The blue CD is rather uptempo, poppy, quite quirky and features Mitch handling all vocal duties. Sometimes it reminds me of Mr. T Experience, but less punk, more indie weirdness (bringing to mind a little They Might Be Giants) and a dash of the '60s. It's a raw recording, but it works with the musical style. The red CD is a good deal different. It opens with Erica crooning out a bluesy bit of heartfelt music. From there, the blues continue, fusing it along with elements of acoustic rock, emotional pop and plenty of melody. Erica commands all the vocals on this CD and she has a voice deserving of such control. The production on this CD is definitely cleaner than the other CD, again, an appropriate sound. This is a fascinating release showing that two great musicians can work together to create some rather differing, yet accomplished, material. (CM)

The Elevator Division • Whatever Makes You Happy EP • Department Records • The four songs on this CD are at times depressing but truly heart felt. This four piece has stumbled upon a definite recipe for success in mainstream rock. These songs capture an array of human emotions often disheartening but a true portrayal of everyday life. With lyrical content pertaining to memories of shattered relationships and youthful angst, The Elevator Division has no trouble relaying their true thoughts and feelings. (RP)

The Fartz • 15 Working Class Songs • Alternative Tentacles Records • The Fartz formed in the early 80's, then took a break until 1998 when they reformed. *15 Working Class Songs* is all new material, with vocals a bit like Corrosion of Conformity circa *Animosity*. The rest of the band pounds out hardcore with thrash roots that are reminiscent of the time when they started. (AL)

The Gamits • Come Get Some • Not Bad Records • It seems like

★QUICKIES...a little bit on a lot of records★

these guys record a disc every two or three days. It is amazing that they can continue to put out quality music that does not end up all sounding the same. This is delicious pop-punk with nice vocal harmonies and enough oomph and crunch so that you don't forget that this is rock, dammit. This is another winner from the Gamits. (MK)

The Hellacopters • *Cream of the Crop Vol. 1* • Gearhead Records • Next time someone tells you they got a rare copy of the Hellacopters first 7", "Killing Allan," for \$275 on e-bay, proceed to laugh in their face. On this first volume of rarities, all three songs from the release are included, plus fifteen other tracks that are just as hard to find, and many that had never been pressed on CD before. Any self-respecting Hellacopters fan will want to run to the store to get this. (AL)

The Infinite Path • *Mansion, Cave, or Lobotomy* • The Infinite Path • There's so much going on here! The influences behind this fascinating band are so varied, one would expect the intersection of them to be a cacophonous mess of hillbilly rock, hip hop, punk, guitar rock and even a little They Might Be Giants-style geek rock. But they ingeniously merge this soupy mess into something experimentally deep, interesting, inspired, and real. It's almost possessed with spooky greatness. (DP)

The Killing Tree • *The Romance of Helen Trent* • OneDaySavior • Pretty straightforward hardcore emo, not unlike a lot of the stuff out there today. The Killing Tree do it up pretty good, with a good amount of passion in the mix. Sort of like a melodic Converge. This record feels good in your heart, and listen after listen you find yourself just feeling it more and more. Everything good about hardcore summed up in 9 beautiful songs. (KM)

The Lackies • *Itch* • Sit-N-Spin Records • Using various influences to pull off their sound, this band crosses between Ween, late Beatles and early Genesis. There is a southern-bred guitar sound that gets rockabilly-like with a popish feel that also turns melodic at times. Moods range from distorted grunge to trippy atmospheres as the concepts slip in and out of the journey inside a man's soul as seen through his own image in a mirror. The versatile nature of this disc should be heard all the way through as it becomes more interesting as it progresses. Some experimenting should have been held back such as the drum machine beats and sample effects that cause this to sound a little overproduced. "The Devil," "Paid," and "Spit It Out" are a few that stand out. (JC)

The MPS • self-titled • self-released • MPS stands for Multi Purpose Solution. Their music is a weird mixture of indie and rock with touches of the Cure, fronted by a guy who sounds like Dicky Barrett of The Mighty Mighty Bosstones getting over a cold. Luckily, he doesn't take over the band, letting all the other players show off their skills. (AL)

The Pattern • Real Feelness • Lookout Records • The new invasion by rock bands like The Stokes, The Hives, and The Vines continues with The Pattern. Straight up rock and roll with a touch of sixties soul and punk sensibilities. It's damn catchy if you ask me, and has vocals with an attitude but no screaming. (AL)

The Post • Backwards • Super Asbestos Records • The Post's *Backwards* is a grab bag of drone rock, melancholic wailing, and tribal beats. Think of a mixture of Radiohead and Godspeed You Black Emperor! with David Byrne sound-alike vocals. There is so much reverb on this album that you'll think there's something wrong with your hearing. (AL)

The Postman Syndrome • Terrafarming • Now or Never • Boring indie rock combined with boring hardcore to create an unappealing sound, the nu-metal breakdowns didn't help much either. Playing this disc repeatedly begging for something positive to say, I'm still at a loss for something good or constructive to say. I imagine this disc appealing to a selective group of people consisting mostly of friends of the band. (KM)

The Rotten Apples • Real Tuff • Empty Records • Take twenty minutes out of your busy schedule to check out the Rotten Apples, an all-female pop-punk / rock group. They have a

little Hives thing going, but they keep things somewhat poppy. Lead singer Dejha sings with attitude and sensuality at the same time. (AL)

The Stryder • *Jungle City Twitch* • Equal Vision • I guess I expected something more than an averagely good release. Sometimes a band gets too hyped to me, and maybe that was the case here. With a brand of slowed down pop indie punk, sometimes I think the songs drag with no real ideas for release. I could see myself getting into this CD at some point, but its slow coming at best. (KM)

The Underground • *All The Passion in the World* • self-released • On the press material the band has this line: "We're rocking and sensitive." That's a pretty appropriate statement. This San Francisco-based band plays poppy indie tunes that, at times, remind me of Luna. Every song is packed with melody and a pop sensibility making it a record that will definitely get in your head. The Underground play the kind of music you can't help but tap your toes to. (CM)

The Unlucky Few • Self-Titled • Self-Released • Like a half-baked cake, uncooked and still kinda eatable, The Unlucky Few sound like a band that's still about 20 minutes from being done. With a raw sound not unlike creative hardcore bands like Quicksand, Shift, or Cave In. There are some breakdowns and choruses that sound too much like good ideas gone bad at the production board. Creative as hell, but just not there yet. (KM)

The Visible Men • *In Socks Mode* • Leisure King Productions • The Visible Men is centered around ex-Cherry Poppin' Daddies Dan Schmid and Dustin Lanker. However, there is no swing revival going on here, just some melancholic piano based pop songs similar to Beulah or Koufax, but slower. Even though the songs are simple, they are still compelling and entertaining. (AL)

The Wicked Screaming Squirts • *Even the Wicked Sometimes Prosper* • self-released • It's hard not to crack a smile when listening to these guys. Lead vocalist Wicked Queenie goes all over the place, from pissed off screaming to childlike squirming. Musically, they are metal all the way, and quite good at it. From all the female fronted metal bands that are coming up these days, this is one of the most unique ones. (AL)

Thievery Corporation • *The Richest Man in Babylon* • Eighteenth Street Lounge Music • It is hard to say that this is an electronic album, because it has so much live instrumentation in it. However, it would fit nicely in the downtempo genre, with its grooved beats and elements of dub, reggae, Latin, jazz, and soul. It's hard to believe that two guys who started out listening to hardcore could make such mellow, neo-retro music, but they're damn good at it. (AL)

Thirty-Two Frames • Self-Titled • Revelation • Featuring ex-members of a whole lot of the best bands to come out of Louisville, Thirty-Two Frames keep the rich musically heritage of the region alive with this recording. Political and driving straight for the heart with a musical style blinded in-between Hot Water Music and By The Grace of God. This might be one of the best new bands Revelation has put out in awhile. This is the band that you want to see in a hot smelly warehouse or something, and walk away with a newfound faith in the scene. (KM)

Totimoshi • «Misterioso?» • Berserker Records • A bit too fast to be considered sludge rock, Totimoshi's guitars are nonetheless thick and deliberate. Think equal parts High on Fire, The Melvins and Queens of the Stone Age. Play this loud in your car, and people a few cars down will feel the low end coming out of your speakers. (AL)

Toxic Narcotic • *We're All Doomed* • Go Kart Records • Ten-year-old Toxic Narcotic is as caustic as ever, with a powerful mix of hardcore, punk and thrash that leaves no eardrum intact. Wasting no time, they cram thirteen songs into 30 minutes, leaving you disoriented and confused, much like after getting hit by a car. (AL)

Transistor Transistor • self-titled • Level Plane Records • Transistor Transistor don't give a shit about the Strokes or the

Hives, and neither will you after you listen to their self-titled EP. In it, you'll find nothing but good old rock and roll with plenty of attitude. You can hear influences from punk, hardcore, and emo reflected in their songs. (AL)

Tsunami Bomb • *The Ultimate Escape* • Kung Fu Records • Labeled as punk rock, this band doesn't show much punk but are led by a charging sound fronted by the female vocals of Agent M. The disc itself, produced by Steve Kravac, has potential but lacks direction. Tracks like "Russian Roulette" and "Headlights On A Hand Grenade" are aggressive, "Top 40 Hit" is about lack of originality within the industry and "The Simple Truth" is a more melodic track that shows the versatility and potential inside this band. (JC)

Various Artists • *A Testament to Broken Walls* • Backroad Records • The purpose of this compilation is to showcase music from various bands, some of which are Christian, and some that are very non-Christian, to show that it's the music that counts. They may differ in their religious views, but one thing they all have in common is a heavy, heavy sound. Punk-meets-hardcore-meets-death-metal in bands like Blue Skies Burning, 7 Angels 7 Plagues, Incision, Silence of the Fall and Fighting Academy. (AL)

Various Artists • *Apocalypse Always* • Alternative Tentacles Records • Eleven out of the twenty-six tracks in this compilation are exclusive and not available anywhere else. Spoken word, punk, hardcore, rock and even a little bluegrass are included. Some of the artists featured are Jello Biafra, D.O.A., Noam Chomsky, The Causey Way, Ratos de Porao, The Fartz, Zen Guerrilla and Half-Japanese, among others. (AL)

Various Artists • *Datawaslost: Building* • Datawaslost Recordings • Focusing on the indie-lo-fi scene in Cincinnati, this compilation meshes many styles in a Sonic Youth meets instrumental Beastie Boys kind of way. Showcasing electronic (Coltrane Motion), alt-rock (Pop Lolita), folk (Velcro One) and hip-hop (DJ Aphid) this compilation moves in many directions without getting lost and without wasting space with nonsense filler like many label compilations do. Full of experimenting sounds that stray from the norm, this collection should keep the indie crowd waiting for what will be released next from this label. (JC)

Various Artists • *DJ Spinna Presents: Beyond Real Experience Vol. 2* • Beyond Real Recordings • With DJ Spinna on nearly all the production, this compilation features a solid roster of hip-hop MCs backed by Spinna's blazin' beats. While this 18-track release does feature some bigger names (Mr. Complex, Sadat X and Guru), it also brings some new artists to the forefront (Brooklyn's Akil and Florida's Dynas, just to name a couple). Other MCs who rip it up on this bumpin' release include Shadowman, label-mates Jigmastas, and Skam. The key

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to this album, in the end, is the music backing up the vocalists. Sure, the MCs can flow like all get-out, but the diversity of sounds on this release make that the truly unique aspect that sets it apart. (CM)

Various Artists • *Love & Rebellion: A Thick Records Label Sampler* • *Thick Records* • This latest sampler by Thick Records features unreleased, out of print, or soon to be released songs from their stable of artists, including The Arrivals, The Gadjits, Calliope, Trenchmouth, Blue Meanies, and Vortis. Musical styles cover indie, punk, folk, and pop. (AL)

Various Artists • *Peanut Butter Wolf's Jukebox 45's* • *Stones Throw Records* • I won't go into the whole story of how Stones Throw started recording hip hop and funk 7" records, but suffice it to say that it's a good thing they did. It's an even thing that they decided to release this CD, which includes songs from that series, songs that are available nowhere else. Artists include Quasimoto, Breakstra, Captain Funkaho, Yesterday's New Quintet, and Dudley Perkins. Whether you are a vinyl enthusiast or not, you'll definitely enjoy the tracks on this CD. (AL)

Various Artists • *Plea for Peace: Take Action Vol. 2* • *Sub City Records* • This double CD is the second in a series conceived to raise awareness of depression and suicide. Not only does it include 32 tracks by artists like Anti-Flag, Poison the Well, Snapcase, Piebald, Dillinger Four and others, but each disc also includes an enhanced portion, which contains information about suicide prevention and a depression-screening tool. Not only do you get great music, but you might also learn what it takes to save someone's life. (AL)

Various Artists • *Soulful Behaviour* • *Jrun Recordings* • As drum & bass fell out of favor in clubland, several artists refused to let go of the genre. Instead, they added elements of funk and soul, even Bossanova, and created "soulful drum & bass." It sometimes features full vocal tracks and is more organic than its machine-like predecessor. One of the pioneers of this subgenre is DJ Addiction, who seamlessly mixes 16 tracks from the Defunked label catalogue. Also included is a bonus disc with unmixed versions of many of the tracks, plus three extra tracks. (AL)

Various Artists • *The Difference Vol. 1* • *Official Joints Recordings* • Not a bad compilation for all hip hop heads out there, although it could have been better considering the packaging of artists. Domingo produces all tracks, and the beats keep bangin' as some high profile (underground) artists lay down rhymes on this release. Dilated Peoples, KRS-One with Tonedeff, High-N-Mighty and Cocoa Brovaz are just a few that came through impressively on this release. Punch-N-Words disappoint on the basic "Native New Yorker" but Deacon The Villain is slammin' on "Watch Yo Mouth" as he connects the best with Domingo's sound. Big L is resurrected on a track with Royal Flush and Kool G. Rap as well. (JC)

Various Artists • *Urban Renewal Program* • *Ninja Tune/Chocolate Industries* • As eclectic as any major city can be, so is this compilation of tracks. Songs by rappers Mos Def and Aesop Rock are butted up against ones by Tortoise and DJ Food. Hip-hop experimentalists Prefuse 73 and RJD2 share space with Cibo Matto's Miho Hatori and While. This is the first in a series of four, so keep your eyes open for the next one while you enjoy this one. (AL)

Various Artists • *Your Scene Sucks* • *Go Kart Records* • This compilation rounds up hardcore bands from the US and Europe, all for the good cause of lighting a fire under hardcore music's ass. Sick of It All, Kill Your Idols, Ensign, Downpour, Tear It Up, The Control, and Revolution Summer are some of the bands featured in these 28 tracks. (AL)

Wafflehouse • *Olympia* • *Forge Again Records* • These boys seem to borrow a page from everybody's book, with a various pallet of styles from indie to hardcore to post hardcore to emo... you get the point. While solidly creative and powerful, there is

an element of multiple personalities you have to get past. Sometimes I'd believe they had 8 or 9 singers. I love a lot of it, I'm confused by some of it, but overall it's a strong release. (KM)

Weatherking • *Millimeters* • *Magnesium Records* • This Boston area trio reminded me of Dianogah, since they employ two bass players (one also plays guitar). For this reason, their sound tends to be closer to the low end. These mostly instrumental indie rock songs are medium in tempo - they are not all-out rockers, but they won't bore you to tears either. (AL)

White Star Line • *Self-Titled* • *Antiantenna* • As musical lines get blurred these sorts of things are gonna happen. WSL's experimental indie static Americana twang sound for example. Girls Against Boys meets *Don Caballero* on the open country roads with the big red barns and cornfields for miles. I'm a sucker for the old style, almost Sailor Jerry artwork too. (KM)

Your Enemies Friends • *The Wiretap EP* • *Buddyhead Records* • This debut by Your Enemies Friends reminded me of The Causey Way and Polysics, because of the intensity and urgency in the songs. The sense of urgency is created by two guitar players and one keyboardist, who never let up. Vocals are mostly screamed, except for "Your Enemies Are Your Friends," which is rather slow and subdued. (AL)

Zelienople • *Pajama Avenue* • *Loose Thread Recordings* • Get ready to be hypnotized. Not only would this music pass as great instrumental drone rock, but singer Matt Christensen's voice also adds to the atmospheric effect, barely whispering his lyrics in a soft, hushed style. Think of Physics with a singer. (AL)

Vinyl releases

Armatron • *Mutation Programming 7"* • *Gold Standard Laboratories* • These guys combine keyboards and other electronics with hardcore and almost death metal throwdowns in their songs. This is what the Locust would sound like if they budgeted more than 50 seconds per song. Mike Patton probably loves this band. (AL)

Chromatics / Monitor Bats • *split 7"* • *Gold Standard Laboratories* • The Chromatics offer up, I think, two tracks. They both sound similar, so maybe it's just one. Regardless, it's an uptempo, funkified rock tune that gets your toes a tappin' and your hips a shakin'. The Monitor Bats come with two, also similar, tracks but with a very different style. They remind me of God Is My Co-Pilot, in that there is a sense of chaos, but the melody finds its way through. They feature drums, guitar and sax with an assault of both male and female vocals. (CM)

Darius Axis • *self-titled 7"* • *Dead Tank Records* • The A-side features one track of mid-tempo indie pop that's heavy on the heartfelt, emotional delivery. Flip it over and you get two more tracks. The first is a bit spacey and catchy as heck with kinda high-pitched vocals that definitely work. The second cut is a bass-heavy indie rock tune that closes out the slab with a bang. (CM)

Declaine • *Caliwayz (remix) 12"* • *Groove Attack* • Declaine punches out tight rhymes over bumpin' Cali style beats on this remix of "Caliwayz" produced by Oh-No. You also get the radio remix, instrumental remix, the original radio version and the original instrumentation, just in case you can't get enough of this cut. Declaine also brings a second tune, "Shit Ain't Right", which is, to me, a damn good, Cali-fied version of A Tribe Called Quest. But here's my complaint: why do you release a song called "Shit Ain't Right" and only put on the radio version. I mean, the title has the word "shit" in it and you can't even say it on the cut you release. Now, that shit ain't right! (CM)

Pete Rock & Grand Agent • *This is What They Meant (GE-OLOGY remixes) 12"* • *Groove Attack* • This is a super duo, blatin' out a solid single that features two different remixes by the smoothed-out GE-OLOGY, plus the original version of the track.

The flipside has instrumentals of all three. The remixes definitely take the original track to a higher level, lifting the beat-factor a notch and adding soul to an already soulful hip-hop cut. I'm just wishin' there was at least one other track on here for me to satiate my appetite for more. (CM)

Pulpy / Primitive Painter • *Split 7"* • *Dead Digital Records* • This split 7" features Primitive Painter and Pulpy with one song each. Primitive Painter's "Self Reference Hour" is a highly danceable house tune with repeating vocal samples and a hint of electro. Pulpy contributes "Water From Different Falls," which has an upbeat rhythm that reminded me of New Order a bit. (AL)

Rescue / Grayson • *split 7"* • *Forge Again Records* • I scored! This is a limited edition, mislabeled record. Look out Sotheby's, this one is gonna bring in a million, easy! Riches aside, this is a great release. Rescue immediately reminded me of Braid. Like Braid, they hail from the midwest (Detroit) and play very technical indie rock that weaves melody through the nimble orchestration. They also feature ex-members of Mycomplex. On the flip is Grayson (but it says Rescue, remember?). Like Rescue, Grayson is definitely a technical band, featuring tight song-structure that's long on creativity. Again, the Braid comparison is hard to ignore, but that's not to say either of these bands lacks creativity - it's just a genre that's familiar and one that I, personally, can't get enough of. And it's on sweet-ass blue vinyl. (CM)

S.T. Monroe / The Like Young • *split 7"* • *Forge Again Records* • STM gives us one cut on the A-side that starts as really flowing, mid-tempo pop rock with fantastic vocals. Halfway through, it busts into an almost rapped/spoken word part and a more aggressive sound that diversifies the tune for the better, before appropriately cutting back to the style the song began with. The Like Young are a husband-wife team (plus an extra guitarist on this release) that rocks out very solid pop rock gems, heavy on the guitar and vocals. The drums pound out an up-tempo beat on both tracks, driving the music forward as the melodies pull you in. They are, truly, hard to resist. (CM)

The Black Lips • *self-titled 7"* • *Electric Human Project* • Group this band with The Hives, The White Stripes and the slew of other sweaty, hard-rockin' bands that are all the rage. The key is "The" at the beginning of your name. I'm sure of it. You get five tracks of '60s influenced hard rock that's amped up enough to give you a good punch to the gut. I'm sure this band puts on a great live show. (CM)

Torn Pale • *self-titled 7"* • *Blue Sanct* • This Indiana band plays haunting rock that, at least based on the two tracks here, can cover a lot of ground. "Chance" is an uptempo post-punk tune with goth influences and piercing guitar lines that add a huge emphasis to the sound. The flip side is darker and more droning, with vocal effects and wavering sounds that remind me of a drunken Cure song. (CM)

Video releases

The Vandals • *Oi to the World: Live in Concert* • *Kung Fu Records* • Every year, the Vandals get together to spread some holiday cheer to their fans by playing a concert featuring tracks from their *Oi to the World* album. This video is of one such concert, captured forever in all its DVD glory. Not only does the disc include 18 tracks, but there is also an audio commentary with the band, a couple of trailers and a link to their website. (AL)

Various Artists • *Secret Weapons of Kung Fu Records* • *Kung Fu Records* • Not only is this a kick-ass compilation of songs from the Kung Fu label, but it is a kick-ass compilation of videos. Eighteen videos by the likes of Audio Karate, The Ataris, No Use For A Name, Antifreeze, Mi6 and Assorted Jelly Beans, plus two fan-submitted animated videos for Ozma and the Vandals. The extras include audio commentaries by some of the bands as they watch their own videos. And you get this for just seven bucks! (AL)

★QUICKIES...a little bit on a lot of RECORDS★

Label Addresses

(write these guys, tell 'em IMPACT sent ya)

Arum, 5555 Melrose Ave., Gloria Swanson Bldg, #209, Hollywood, CA 90038
 A Las Olas Recordings, no contact info available
 Absolutely Kosher Records, 1412 10th St. Berkeley, CA 94710
 Alternative Tentacles Recs, PO Box 41902, San Fran, CA 94141-9092
 Antiantenna, 4-1528 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6R 1A4
 Arborvitae Records, PO Box 857, Champaign, IL 61824
 Arcade Inferno, PO BOX 756, St. Petersburg, FL 33703-0756
 Arakis Records, PO Box 31660, Philadelphia, PA 19147
 Asian Man Records, PO Box 35585 Monti Sereno, CA 95030
 Backroad Records, 20260 Fieldstone Crossing, Goshen, IN 46528
 BBE, 88 Langton Road, Criklewood, London, NW2 6QA
 BC Records, 88 Lundy's Lane, San Francisco, CA 94110 USA
 Beavtiful, PO Box 42462, Washington, DC 20015
 Berserker Records, 411 S. Impala Dr., Ft. Collins, CO 80521
 Beyond Real Recordings, 296 Gates Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11216
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 Blue Sanct, PO Box 2192, Bloomington, IN 47402-2192
 Bone Break, c/o Jeff Hall, 3338 Country Creek Dr., Kennesaw, GA 30152
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 Gold Standard Laboratories, PO Box 178262, San Diego, CA 92177
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 Souleslist Elements, no contact info available
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 The Wicked Screaming Squirts, PO Box 100406, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33310
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 Trustkill Records, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724
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Action for Nuclear Abolition

When: October 5-15, 2002
 Where: Near Las Vegas, Nevada
 Info: www.shundhai.org/ANAmain.htm

Transform Columbus Day

When: October 10-14, 2002
 Where: Denver, CO
 Info: www.transformcolumbusday.org

Media Democracy Day

When: October 18, 2002
 Where: Worldwide
 Info: www.mediademocracyday.org

International Conference on Globalization, Justice and the Trafficking of Women and Children

When: Oct. 25-26, 2002
 Where: Univ. of Washington
 Info: mglv@u.washington.edu

Nat'l Assoc. for Multicultural Education 13th Annual International Conference

When: Oct. 30-Nov. 3, 2002
 Where: Washington, DC
 Info: www.nameorg.org

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Godless Americans March on Washington

When: November 2, 2002
 Where: Washington, DC
 Info: www.godlessamericans.org

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 15th Annual Creating Change Conf.

When: November 6-10, 2002
 Where: Portland, OR
 Info: www.creatingchange.org

Marijuana Policy Project & Students for Sensible Drug Policy Conference

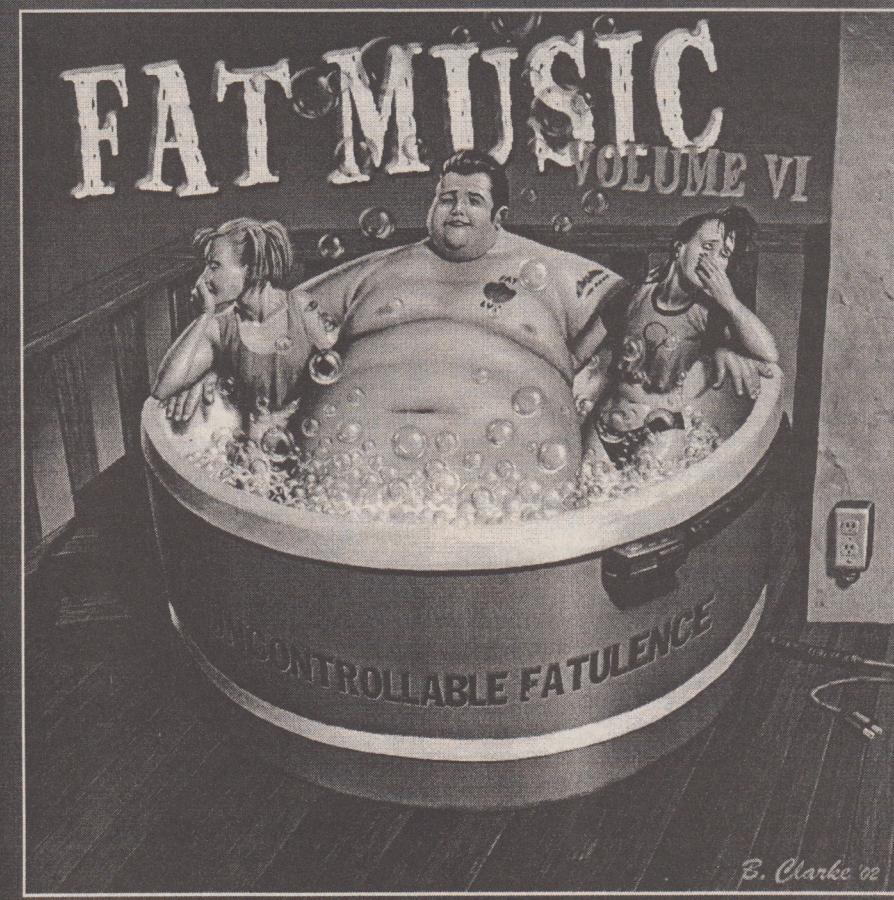
When: November 8-10, 2002
 Where: Anaheim, CA
 Info: www.mpp.org/conference/

Shutdown the School of the Americas

When: November 15-17, 2002
 Where: Fort Benning, GA
 Info: www.soaw.org/nov2002.html

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When: December 1-4, 2002
 Where: Sheraton Seattle, Washington
 Info: www.harmreduction.org



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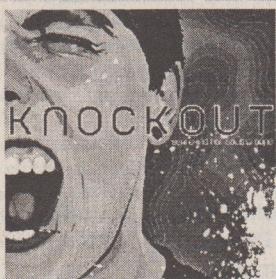
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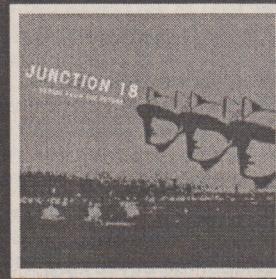
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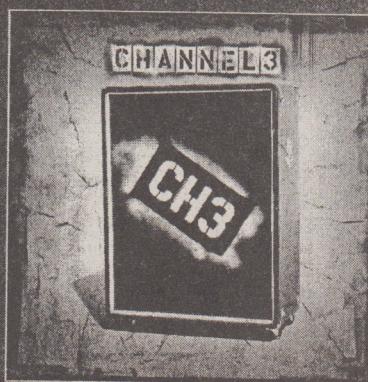
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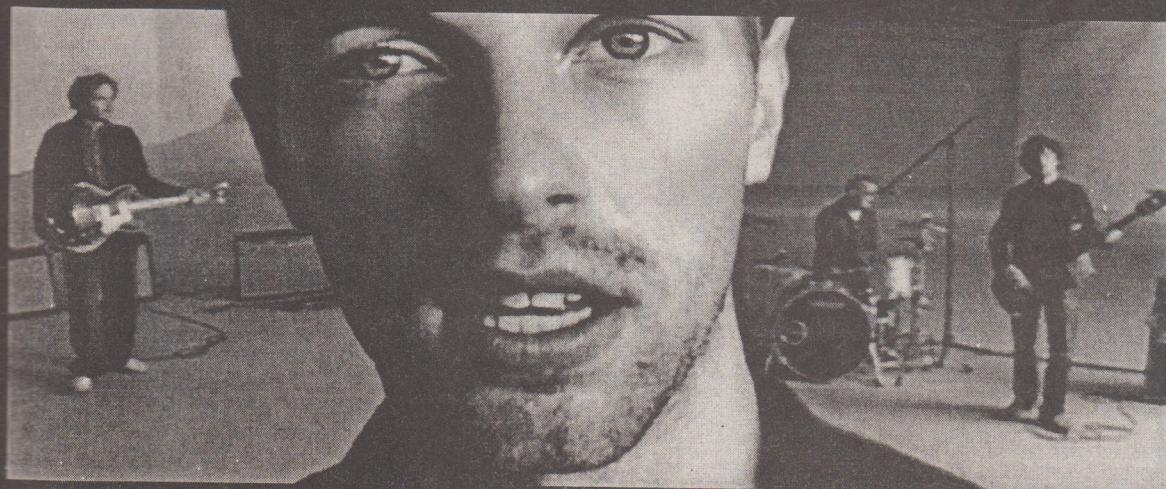
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Someone Speak Up

(FINLEY, continued from page 40)

hard upon. I glance about my immediate area, maybe examine a phone or paper clip more closely than I normally would, and then begin to wonder if someone is going to speak up and free me from this awkward moment so I can go on thinking about the world, its history, and its unforeseeable future in a normal fashion. To me, designating a moment of silence is no different than asking everyone in a room to take their shoes off and hold them above their heads for ten minutes in order to generate cancer awareness. There's really no point in asking everyone to do something that goes against what they would normally do, nor should the obvious weight of a single event need to be crunched into a ten second time limit. Pondering a tragic event or the death of a loved one isn't done while waiting in line to switch your license over from Utah to Iowa, it's done whenever your mind happens to skim across it while firing off the trillions of other thoughts it has whirling away inside it. I'll trade one moment of forced silence for the infinite number of times I've been given pause by tragedies both personal and worldwide.

And besides, that nearsighted elderly lady on crutches needed her license right away. **KK**

And The Winner Is...

(NOTES, continued from page 9)

Of course, being politicians, the contestants would try to cheat.

However, I'm sure we could see to it that it's at least as fair as the last election. And if it worked out for local and state races, then maybe the 2004 Presidential race could be run this way. Imagine what might have happened if the last presidential race had been held like that: it's doubtful we'd have a mush-mouthed, sawed-off little goat-roper in the White House now.

The lights begin to fade up on the empty chairs behind MORRIS, as one-by-one, the GROUP MEMBERS return. This time, they wear the faces of past US Presidents: Bush, Clinton, Bush, Reagan, Carter, and Ford. They begin to hum quietly to underscore: "God Bless America."

So I was having this little fantasy, chuckling to myself at the absurdity of the idea, planning to write what I thought would be a column about this ridiculously improbable concept, when an ad came on the television promoting an FX network knockoff of *American Idol*.

The humming gets slightly louder, then the masked Presidents begin to sing the words, just loudly enough that MORRIS has to shout to be heard.

This new reality series, *American Candidate*, will ostensibly do for politics what its sibling did for pop music.

BUSH and CLINTON step forward, handing MORRIS something in a plastic grocery bag.

I could hardly believe my ears. Here I thought I'd had a kind of funny, ironic, satirical idea—and I'll be damned! it's going to happen. (*The Presidential voices swell up, singing at full volume. MORRIS removes something from the bag. It is a mask of Richard Nixon.*) That's kind of scary, when you think about it. (*He puts on the Nixon mask, and joins the others singing, as the lights fade.*)

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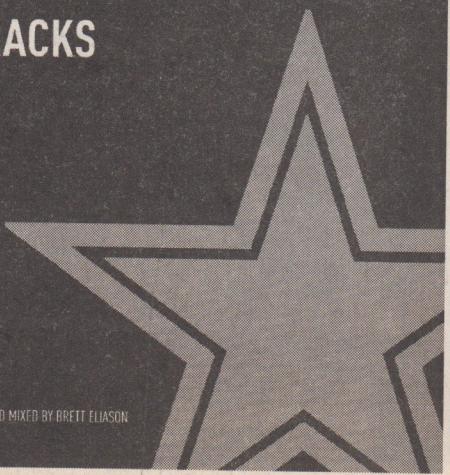
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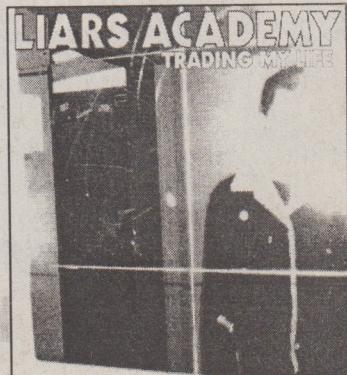
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Issue #38, April/May '02, Cover Story: One Nation Under God - Blurring the Line Between Church and State – Also: Umasking the Drug-Terror Link; Canned Hunts: Slaughter By Any Other Name

Issue #37, February/March '02, Cover Story: Dying For a Cigarette – Also: Four Lies About Social Security; Rip, Mix, Burn, Go To Jail!; DEA vs. Hemp: Another "War" Waged

Issue #36, December/January '01-'02, Cover Story: Beyond The Bombs - Winning the "War" on Terrorism – Also: Endangered Species: Now Or Never; A Strong People Do Not Need a Government

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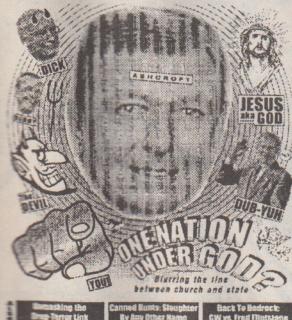
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IMPACT



issue #38

Balancing Act; America is Selling Out Taiwan; TJ Walker columns

Issue #22, August/September '99, Cover Story: Prisoners of Conscience - US Political Prisoners – Also: Space Exploration & Exploitation; America's Ritual Genocide of Iraq

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Issue #24, December/January '99-00, Cover Story: Creationism - Monkeying With Science Education – Also: Articles by two death row inmates; Senate to World: "Screw You!" (**OUT OF PRINT!**)

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issue #37

WORLD WAR III



CHRISTOPHE MIERD
2002